

JOSEPHINE E. COLE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

AFRO-AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO
PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

Co-sponsored by

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Josephine E. Cole
(Interviewee)

Date 6-8-78

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Project Coordinator: Lynn Bonfield

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPHINE FOREMAN COLE

MAY 8, 1978

At Mrs. Cole's home in San Francisco

Interviewer: Jesse J. Warr, III

Transcriber: Mary Wells

BEGIN TAPE 1:4:1 (FIRST SESSION - MAY 8, 1978)

JC: I was born on January 18, 1913.

JW: Was that at home or in a hospital?

JC: No, I think it was at home. Near the Panama-Pacific International Fairgrounds. We used to live way at the foot of Buchanan Street, 3335.

JW: Were there any particular stories that were told related to your birth, in later years?

JC: Well, my mother and father said I started talking at the age of five months. And I've never quit since. (Laughs) I don't know if they were fond parents and exaggerated or not. But, I had a marvelous grandfather. You want to hear about this?

JW: Sure.

JC: He was my mother's father. Terrifically handsome man -- six feet one. Marvelous memory. He was a York Rite Mason. When he was twelve years old he ran away from his home. He was born in upper-state New York. His father was a Cherokee Indian. I never knew what his mother was. He never said and, being little then, I didn't ask him. But, anyway, he ran away to sea and became a cabin boy on a British boat. He spent many years working up to first mate. Always in the British navy... ny-a-vee. In fact he had slightly British accent.

His name was Henry Brown. My grandfather had tutored himself. But he evidently had a most retentive mind, a very inquiring mind. He was evidently quite favored by captains and others until he became older himself -- so that he had a very good education, self-taught. He knew quite a bit about the law, and so he took me under

JC: his wing and began to teach me to read and do these things. So every once in a while we'd show up at school and I'd get skipped a couple of grades. So I graduated from Jean Parker Elementary School at the age of nine. Sociologically it was very bad. But my mother thought it was great and my father thought it was great. Of course, I thought it was marvelous.

Then I went to Girls' High School, which is now defunct, but it was at the corner of Geary and Scott. It became Benjamin Franklin Junior High School. Now its future is in danger. No one knows whether it's going to be closed or left open, because under "Redesign" it's one of the less favored schools. Because its attendance has dropped off; its delinquency rate has dropped up -- unfortunately -- etcetera etcetera. Those are all school problems. So, I graduated from Girls' High School and went to the University of California.

JW: Okay. (We will go back a little ways.)

JC: I was very unready then.

JW: I assume you were named for your father.

JC: Yes, and my mother too. My sister has thrown that up several times and said, "I wasn't expected. Because your name is Josephine Elizabeth." My father's name was Joseph; my mother's name was Elizabeth.

JW: You have one sister then?

JC: One sister: Phyllis.

JW: Is she older than you?

JC: No, no. She's five years younger. Phyllis Catherine Foreman, she was. Then she was Nelson. She married Tommy Nelson of Pasadena. She was married to him for twenty-eight years. Then they got divorced. Both remarried other people within a year. She married Harold Jackson, who was one of the original Inkspots, incidentally, the famous singing group. They live in Pasadena.

JW: Your mother's name then was Elizabeth?

JC: Elizabeth.

JW: What was her maiden name?

JC: Brown.

JW: Her father was Henry Brown who made a career with the British Navy?

JC: Yes. Then came to San Francisco and was the manager of the janitors for Firemen's Fund for a number of years. In fact he retired from there.

JW: What was a "york wright?"

JC: Well, it's something like Scottish Rite, except it's more ancient and honorable.

JW: Oh, I thought it was an occupation.

JC: No. He was a York Rite Mason. It's about fiftieth degree, if you had it. There are very few of them in the world now. They were endowed by the then Prince of Wales, who later became the King of England.

JW: And his wife was whom?

JC: My grandmother Catherine. Catherine Brown.

JW: Where was she born?

JC: She was born in... I don't know when. I guess around 1850. I guess. She was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and came to San Francisco as a very young girl.

JW: Oh, she was?

JC: Yes.

JW: What did she look like?

JC: Oh, she was sweet. She was small. I have a picture of her if you'd like to see it. [Break to retrieve and examine picture].

JW: What do you remember about her?

JC: My grandmother?

JW: Yes.

JC: She made marvelous cookies and Parker House rolls. And she was always singing. She liked to play the piano. She couldn't play; she would just pick at it with her fingers. But she knew the lyrics of many, many, many songs. She loved Stephen Foster songs and she liked ballads, that sort of thing. She also knew some songs from World War One. Her mother was a Kentuckian from Louisville and her relatives were in Louisville. Her mother had been a young woman at the time that the slaves were emancipated. I think that's the way it was. I'm pretty sure that's the way it was.

My grandmother had married a Caucasian in San Francisco -- or if he wasn't a Caucasian, they thought he was, because he was a member of the fire department. He was killed in a fire. Then my grandfather's wife was ill, and my grandmother went to help with the house and to sort of be a practical nurse. And she the wife died. Then my grandfather and my grandmother married.

JW: Oh. So they both were married before?

JC: Yes.

JW: What was her maiden name?

JC: Payne. P-A-Y-N-E. Incidentally, my mother's cousin, my second cousin, was the first Black social worker in Louisville, Kentucky.

JW: Oh. So you remember her parents were from Kentucky and had been born in slavery?

JC: Yes. Louisville.

JW: Is there anything else that you know of them?

JC: No. Don't know anything else.

JW: Catherine Payne then spent most of her life doing domestic work?

JC: Yes. Well, she didn't work much after she married my grandfather. She never had to work. I know that she had been a cook in the Peckham family's home up in Colusa County, I think it was. She also had accepted a position in Newark, New Jersey, many years ago.

But they're just vague memories. I never asked about them. Didn't seem to be interested in roots in those days. My Aunt Grace, who was my mother's only sister, was really a half-sister. She was a very beautiful woman with very blue eyes and very blonde hair. My Aunt Grace married a Jackson. And I still have cousins living in Oakland.

JW: Was your grandfather frequently at sea or had he...?

JC: No. He had retired from the seagoing voyages when I was old enough to pay any attention. He was the head janitor and building manager for the Firemen's Fund when they were downtown. They weren't always out here in this great big place. In fact, that was a cemetery in those days, Laurel Hill Cemetery. They excavated it and built the Fireman's Fund. Where Kaiser Hospital now is, we used to run along a wall and play along there. That was the Pioneer Cemetery.

JW: How did she happen to -- Catherine Payne, her half-sister -- in what way were they half-sisters?

JC: You mean my mother and Aunt Grace?

JW: Right.

JC: Catherine Payne wasn't a half-sister. It was her daughter. My mother was her

JC: daughter by Henry Brown; but her first husband -- and I don't know his name -- who was in the fire department, he was the father of Aunt Grace.

JW: Right. Where was your mother born?

JC: San Francisco.

JW: When?

JC: In 1884.

JW: What did she look like?

JC: Well, I look like her except she was short. She had beautiful hair... long, long, beautiful hair. I don't have any good pictures of Mother at hand. It would take me too much time to find them. I have one of her when she was... when I gave her a seventy-fifth birthday party here. I was looking at it the other day.

JW: Did she go to the public schools here?

JC: Oh, yes. She went to Sarah B. Cooper. In those days it went to what would now be the ninth grade. Then she got a job working as a "receptionist," I guess you'd call it, for a medical supply company -- Goodband's on Van Ness Avenue. She was working there when the Fire and Earthquake wiped them out.

JW: Did she tell you anything about that?

JC: Oh, yes. She had old melted dishes and things, you know. Oh, yes. She and my grandmother and grandfather lived in a tent down on what is now Ghirardelli Square. They lived there because that was the only arterial spring in the neighborhood and they got fresh water. She told me about the military requirements and so on and so forth. Then she and my father got married. Well, they got married two years later.

JW: 1908?

JC: Yes.

JW: Other than being a receptionist, what kinds of things was she involved in?

JC: That's about it I guess. She was a young person then.

JW: Was she a church-goer?

JC: Oh, Lord, yes. She went to Catholic church as a girl. But after she married my father... He was sort of race-oriented and he was also from the South. They couldn't find any Black Catholics in those days; so they joined Bethel A.M.E. Church, which at that time was at 1207 Powell Street. Which is now the Cathay

JC: Funeral Parlor. The new Bethel Church... well, we call it new -- it's been out there for a while... is at 821 Laguna. Mother was one of the oldest members in the Church. When she was in the Church fifty years, they gave her a sort of a recognition service -- to which she didn't go. She never wanted to admit her age. If she were here now, she'd have a fit over having her age revealed.

JW: How did she meet your father?

JC: Well, she was a receptionist. She also had to, once in a while, deliver some medical supply or one of those things you wear around the neck if the person couldn't pick it up or the delivery boy had gone. So she was delivering a hearing aid, I believe it was, and she passed the St. Dunstan's Hotel. And she saw this tall handsome... my father was very handsome and tall, my mother was short... she saw this tall, handsome man. He said "hello." So she hurried on with her nose high in the air and got Mr. Alberga (who is still living) to introduce them. Colonel Alberga. He was a Colonel in World War 1.

JW: Right. We have an interview with him.

JC: Oh, you do. Well, he introduced them, as I understand. In that book, The Earth Shook and the Fire Burned, my father is mentioned as being doorman at St. Dunstan's Hotel. That's how they met.

JW: Was this a luxury hotel?

JC: Yes. Any hotel that has a uniformed doorman is pretty up there.

JW: Let's turn for a minute to your father, Joseph Foreman. He's referred to in some of the interviews we've done as "Joe Shreve."

JC: Yes, right.

JW: How did he get that name?

JC: Well, after the Fire and Earthquake, Shreve's jewelry store decided to rebuild. They were wiped out, I believe. My father used to call him "Old Man Shreve." Shreve's was establishing itself at Post and Grant Avenue, where they still are. They were going all out for the luxury... "carriage trade" it was called then. So they had to have a doorman. And they remembered the doorman at St. Dunstan's, which was burned. My father was offered the job and he took it. And he stayed there. He went to work there the year after they were married. That would be 1909. He stayed there until the year that he died, which was 1955. So he was there for forty-six years.

JW: Did he feel in some way... How did he feel about the job?

JC: My father is hard to describe. You'd have to know him. He was a gentleman in the highest sense of the word. He was the same at home as he was in the public.

JC: He treated us -- there were just the two girls and my mother -- he treated us as if we were royalty. He was always kind. I know this doesn't sound true, but so help me, it is. I don't think he ever raised his voice. I never heard him swear, although I know he could because he had been in the Philippine Islands with the civilian army after the Spanish-American War. He was a very scholarly man although he'd only had about three years of schooling in a little dirt-floor school back in Kentucky. He was born in Hartford, Kentucky. And he didn't drink; he didn't carouse. He was just too good to be true.

He loved people. If he'd see you now... ten years later he'd remember your name. Everybody loved him. He always got gorgeous presents. People from all over the world knew him. He was the time-keeper for the Polo Club and the Greeter for the Seals baseball. He later became a special policeman. And he used to go to the weddings and special parties. He was always in demand... So Shreve's was the store he worked for and everybody just called him Joe "Shreve." It got to be his name. Then when Herb Caen started writing about him in his books and in his columns... in fact, Herb had something in last year. He said that he never passes Post and Grant Avenue without seeing my father there. [Voice breaks] Sorry... That brings back memories.

JW: Do you want me to stop for a minute?

JC: No, no, no. That's all right. [Recover] He was a wonderful man. He was an Odd Fellow and a Knight of Pythias and a Mason. And a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church. But I think he was mostly a member there because Mother wanted him to be. He was always impatient to get out of church on Sundays and go.

He loved to drive. He always drove. He could drive anything, from a Dussenberg to a Dovel steam car. He told me when... he used to work for extra, he worked for someone that lived in Palo Alto. I should remember. Bancroft the historian -- it was his son. The Bancroft Library at UC is their heritage. Young Bancroft had a steam car, a Dovel steam car. They made it from Palo Alto to Ocean Beach. It was written up in the newspapers at the time, I think. He told me that was an exciting moment. They didn't have to stop and no horses passed them. It was just great.

JW: How did he happen to come out to California?

JC: Well, he was impatient with the fact that there weren't many advantages in Hartford, Kentucky, a little one-horse town. His grandmother raised him. His mother and father died quite young.

He'd heard that there were lucrative jobs in the Philippines for young men who would go over there in the civilian settlement after the Spanish-American War -- the Occupation. So he went to the Philippines. He got to be fairly fluent in Tagalog too. And he came back to San Francisco because he needed a change. He'd been working in the cholera unit and he'd felt ill himself. He didn't have cholera, but he was ill and tired. So at that time Walter Loving, Sr., was coming back. They were friends. Walter Loving, of course, was very distinguished. He

JC: was a major and he established the Philippine Constabulary Band and is a famous Black man. So Walter Loving was coming back; so he and Jim Cranston, who was the first Black warrant officer in the U.S. Army, were friends of my father's. So he came back with them.

He liked San Francisco. So he decided that he'd wait a while before he went back to the Philippines. In the meantime he had to eat. So he got the job at St. Dunstan's. That was in 1905, late in 1905. He'd only been working there for a few months when the Fire and Earthquake happened on April 18, 1906.

JW: What did he remember or tell you about his grandparents? Had they been born in slavery?

JC: Yes. His grandmother was Amy Nall, N-A-L-L. She was written up in the paper. She lived to be 104. He went back to see her... my mother and father and I went back to see her when I was a little bit of a girl. That was a big highlight. Then he went back later in the Twenties to see her. Only he went then because my sister was little then and I wasn't very big either. He went back to see my great grandmother. She died a few years later.

JW: What had happened to his parents, or did he remember?

JC: Well, I don't remember so well. I just know that his mother was very beautiful -- a mulatto. She died young. (I guess no health care.) And he had one brother, Louis, who was a fireman in St. Paul-Minneapolis. One of the uncles had gone to St. Paul and been the head of a rod and gun club there -- you know, ran the club. Virgil his name was, Vigil Nall. And he sent for both boys because my father didn't get along well with his step-father, which was Louis' father, his half-brother's. So Louis went to St. Paul and settled there and became a fireman. He also was the blue-eyed, blonde type. So he got in the fire department and he settled there and married Roberta, who is still living.

I lost my cousin two and a half years ago -- their only child, Ollie. We were friends. Ollie was a colonel, lieutenant colonel in World War II. He retired, and then he went to school and became a teacher. He died on the schoolyard at Malcolm X School. That was in Jersey City, New Jersey.

JW: You said that he had taken a job later in life as a "special policeman." What does that mean?

JC: Well, it wasn't so "later in life." It was a few years after he went to work at Shreve's. Special policeman -- he took an examination, was sworn in. We still have his papers in the vault. That meant that he had a badge and he was empowered -- in those days we didn't have "citizen's arrest" -- he could arrest someone. But he also was empowered and bonded to watch gifts and jewels and that sort of thing. It worked in well at Shreve's, when they used to have late customers or stay open late for the holidays, to have someone guarding the vault or someone guarding the displays of diamonds. Because there were millions of dollars represented and

- JC: insurance companies always insisted. And the salesmen were not bonded to that extent. Also, he was in great demand to work at parties and weddings where he would "receive" the bride and help her out of her carriage. He would also help at the reception watching gifts and so forth.
- JW: So he never actually walked a beat and had to deal with criminals.
- JC: Oh no. No, no. Special policemen don't do that. We still have them today. They work in hotels and stores. They may be on the detective squad looking for shoplifters. They're always in civilian dress.
- JW: Did he have to wear, or did he enjoy wearing, a livery?
- JC: He wore it always. Well do I remember. I used to have his old ones made into coats for me. But I don't know whether he "enjoyed" it or not. It was just a part of Daddy, and he always wore them. I don't know. He was the kind of person, if he were a street-sweeper, it would be a dignified position. I don't think anyone ever called him a buffoon or a calicomania (sic) man or anything like that. He added dignity. He always was polite and courteous, and you just don't fool around with a person like that. He was not the clown type at all.
- JW: Who were his heroes?
- JC: Well, he admired Theodore Roosevelt. And he admired Paul Lawrence Dunbar.
- JW: Would he read from Dunbar to you as a girl?
- JC: No, no. He was always reading National Geographics and adventure books. He loved Lowell Thomas and he was always going to Lhasa in disguise -- that sort of thing. I remember once (Laughs) long time ago... he used to do quite a bit of the shopping for us at certain times. We only had one car -- old Oldsmobile with a rounded front was our first car. And Mother asked him to bring some butter home; he forgot it. And she said, "Now Joe, we can't eat yak butter you know," referring to his fondness for travels in Tibet -- although he never traveled much. After we were grown and married he did insist -- my mother was a homebody -- he did insist on their going to Mexico. They had a nice trip to Mexico. But he never got to Europe or Africa or South America.
- JW: Well, how did he happen to get to Lhasa? That's more remote, even now, than any of those other places.
- JC: Through the National Geographic. He read about them. He never went there.
- JW: Oh, I see.
- JC: He used to sit and read and read and read. And he was well-informed. He was strong in his political beliefs. He was a Republican from the word go, because that was in the day when that was Abraham Lincoln's party.

JW: Right.

JC: No, no, no. I didn't mean to confuse. I gave you a misconception if you thought that. No, he went all these places through the National Geographic. We still have stacks of the old ones here.

JW: When he proposed to marry your mother, was there any objection from her family that he was not a native or anything like that?

JC: Oh, I don't think so. No, I don't think so. Who could object to my father! They were dam lucky to have him in the family. (Laughter)

JW: I noticed in some of my research that he was mentioned as being the master of ceremonies for the Cosmos Club's 1944 Roland Hayes concert -- something along that line. What was the Cosmos Club?

JC: The Cosmos Club. I ran the last two major programs myself because he had retired from it and things had changed. We had a different kind of Cosmos. I still have the pictures of publicity on that. Well, the Cosmos Club was an early established club. Uncle Bill and some of the others established it. I call him my Uncle Bill -- he was like my uncle. He always gave me a quarter. That was Mr. William Lashley. Colonel William Lashley and Colonel A.P. Lee. They were World War 1 veterans. Alberga [another Project interviewee] can tell you all about that.

Cosmos Club was established when I was just a baby. But it was a social club dedicated to forums and musicals and all sorts of elevating cultural things. It was the one effort of integrated activity between White and Black.

JW: Oh. I didn't understand that it was integrated.

JC: Oh, yes. Definitely. That was one of the prerequisites of it. And it had notable people belonging to it. John D. Barry who was a noted columnist in the old Call-Bulletin was on the board; Major Loving was on the board; and the mayor of the city ex-officio was always chairman of the board. Mr. Lashley was the president year after year after year. My father was on the board and he was the master of ceremonies at the big annual ball. If you didn't get invited to the Cosmos, you just weren't anything. (Laughs)

JW: It defined "society."

JC: Oh, yes. Before the Second World War.

JW: For Blacks, or for Blacks and for Whites.

JC: Well, for Blacks. The Whites that came were not trash, you know. They were acknowledged leaders. But they were outstanding in that they were cooperative.



JC: They weren't just there as tokens. They had participated all year round. Yes, I grew up in the Cosmos Club.

JW: What would you say were the basic differences between your parents?

JC: Well, they were extremely different. My mother was a very strong-willed, stern, high-principled, one-man woman of impeccable moral character. Rather censorious of people who weren't up to those standards. She didn't touch a drop to drink and she didn't want any done in the house either. She was very, very strict. She didn't allow us to go to any dances that were paid admission, because her credo was that "anybody" could get in them. She didn't believe much in dating before you were eighteen. She was extremely strict.

She had very high ambitions. She said, "Girls, you're both girls and you're Colored --" those were the words we used then, "so you're going to have to do twice as much to get half of what the Whites have." It was sort of a tacit implication that "that's the way it was." So we never thought of rebellion. This is why I'm so thankful I've lived to see the courageous sit-ins and the inspiration of a Martin Luther King -- whom I heard twice. I'm just very thankful that the young people of today don't accept things. I wish they were a little more on the discipline...

END TAPE 1:4:1

BEGIN TAPE 1:4:2

JC: [Refers to father]..lucky at first, although Mother disciplined him. Very popular, very delightful. Loved company. He liked life. Mother did too. They were very different, very different.

JW: But in a sense complementary.

JC: Oh, yes. And oh, so "devoted." When my father died, I don't know how my mother weathered the storm, but she did -- knowing her high principles. And there were telegrams and letters. Over a thousand of the letters alone. By hand she answered every one of those. It took her a couple of years, but she did it. She didn't want any help from anybody. But, oh, she was strong. I admired her greatly.

But the discipline in the family was from Mother not Dad. We loved it when Mother went away on church conferences. Then we'd have ice cream and candy. We went to the show. The old Golden Gate Theater in those days had Horace Height and Cob Calloway, and all those... and vaudeville and cracker jacks. Oh, we had lots of fun -- cavities in the teeth. But it was fine. Because Mother went to lots of conferences. She was always secretary. She was very sharp intellectually. She wrote well; she remembered everything. So she was always in demand as the secretary.



JW: Did you ever feel... I guess under those circumstances you never felt it to be a disadvantage to be a girl? Did your father ever yearn for a boy?

JC: I remember when I went to college, and my sister too, people said, "What are you educating those girls for, Joe? They're only going to get married," and so forth. He said, "My girls are my wealth." He was very proud of us. He said, "My girls are my wealth and they're going to get every thing that I can place before them. They won't have to work in anybody's kitchen. They won't have to kowtow -- that's the word he used -- "they won't have to kowtow to anybody." And he said, "Anything within reason that I can do for them, they're going to have it."

Of all the bunch we knew, we were the only ones that went to college -- for years and years. You just didn't send girls to college. They saved up their money and sent them to your city [Washington, D.C.] and other places to find husbands.

JW: (Laughs) They sent them there to find husbands?

JC: Sure. There were just redcaps and Pullman porters around here. That's what the mothers said. (Laughter) It was a hard way to go in those days.

JW: Could you describe the house you grew up in?

JC: Yes. We didn't move much. I was born, as I said, over at 3335 Buchanan Street. A little cottage. And my grandfather and grandmother lived in the adjoining cottage. There was a fence between. They were cute little cottages, like the kind they have on postcards. And we had a swing.

I remember gypsies coming around with monkeys and argan-grinders with monkeys, Italian men, and gypsies with a sort of a circus. It was a favorite place for little shows, because it was flat down there, you know. It later became the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and it's the site now where the Palace of Fine Arts is. And we skated and had fun. I had an Indian suit: I remember that so well.

The school near there was the Yerba Buena, which is still there -- Yerba Buena Elementary School. Then we moved to 921 Jackson Street. Mother and Dad went to the church right around the corner, which was 1207 Powell. And Jean Parker, which is down on Broadway near Powell, was the school where I went periodically and always got skipped a couple of grades.

JW: Was that school predominantly Chinese?

JC: No, no, no. It was predominantly Italian. The Chinese went to school in Chinatown. They didn't go to Jean Parker. Now I know things have changed. Virginia Wales is principal there now; (we were talking not long ago). But in those days the Chinese kids stayed in Chinatown. The Chinese were contained in

JC: Chinatown; they didn't go anywhere else.

JW: So they didn't attend public schools at all?

JC: Yes. We had public schools in Chinatown. Commodore Sloat... Commodore Stockton rather... and the other one is Washington Irving. Those were schools where the Chinese went, exclusively, because they were big enough to accommodate all the Chinese kids. So they went there. Sure there were public schools; they've always gone to public schools. But they didn't venture up to Jean Parker. That was in Italian Town, and those were Italian kids -- a few Spanish -- but mostly Italian.

I remember the day when Luisa Tetrazzini visited the school. It was a great day. We all had our dolls and we all sat along the ridge there. Mayor Robinson put up a tunnel there. The Sisters came down from the Church of Senora de la Guadalupe and we had, oh, a big gala for Tetrazzini. And there was one girl there that was going to be a great singer. In fact, Tetrazzini took her to Italy with her. I saw her once in a movie years later. But she didn't achieve the great heights that Tetrazzini did, of course.

There was a firehouse there where the firemen used to always come to school and talk about fire prevention. I was there one day when they did. And they gave us a ride once, I remember, on their fire trucks. Just around the block. But they did.

JW: It probably seemed like around the world!

JC: I remember the Italians getting big boxes of grapes. The old Italians, they didn't seem to mind the flies. They'd all wash their feet and take the grapes out in the backyard and scrunch them around -- you know, walk all over them to get the juice. They made their own wine. They were all from the old country, those old Italians.

JW: Were there any sorts of frictions between groups that you recall?

JC: We didn't have any "groups" for there to be frictions. There were just a very few "Colored people," they called them, or "Negroes." And they were scattered all over town. They didn't live in ghettos. And didn't have any friction.

I did notice discrimination within the Negro groups; the light Negroes tended to associate together, and the darker ones with the darker ones, unfortunately. You were told to watch out and not marry somebody that was dark because then, inevitably, the children would be dark, and that was hard.

Not that there was any feeling [by Negroes] against it [a dark complexion]. But the White people tended to hire lighter-skinned Negroes. Many jobs in hotels

THEORY OF THE EARTH

CHAPTER I. OF THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH

THE EARTH, as we see it, is a globe, or sphere, of a very great size, and is composed of a solid mass of matter. It is surrounded by a fluid atmosphere, and is covered by a layer of water. The surface of the globe is not perfectly smooth, but is covered with mountains, hills, valleys, and rivers. The interior of the globe is also not perfectly smooth, but is covered with a layer of molten matter, which is called the magma. The magma is composed of a mixture of iron, nickel, and silicon, and is at a temperature of about 1000 degrees Celsius. The magma is surrounded by a layer of solid matter, which is called the crust. The crust is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum, and is at a temperature of about 500 degrees Celsius. The crust is the outermost layer of the globe, and is the layer that we live on.

The crust is divided into two parts, the upper crust and the lower crust. The upper crust is the part of the crust that is closest to the surface, and is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum. The lower crust is the part of the crust that is further from the surface, and is composed of a mixture of iron, nickel, and silicon. The upper crust is the part of the crust that is closest to the surface, and is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum. The lower crust is the part of the crust that is further from the surface, and is composed of a mixture of iron, nickel, and silicon.

The magma is the source of the heat that drives the movement of the crust. The magma is at a temperature of about 1000 degrees Celsius, and is surrounded by a layer of solid matter, which is called the crust. The crust is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum, and is at a temperature of about 500 degrees Celsius. The crust is the outermost layer of the globe, and is the layer that we live on.

CHAPTER II. OF THE ORIGIN OF THE ATMOSPHERE

THE ATMOSPHERE, as we see it, is a layer of gas that surrounds the globe. It is composed of a mixture of nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. The atmosphere is the layer of gas that surrounds the globe, and is the layer that we breathe. The atmosphere is composed of a mixture of nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. The atmosphere is the layer of gas that surrounds the globe, and is the layer that we breathe.

The atmosphere is divided into two parts, the lower atmosphere and the upper atmosphere. The lower atmosphere is the part of the atmosphere that is closest to the surface, and is composed of a mixture of nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. The upper atmosphere is the part of the atmosphere that is further from the surface, and is composed of a mixture of hydrogen, helium, and neon. The lower atmosphere is the part of the atmosphere that is closest to the surface, and is composed of a mixture of nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. The upper atmosphere is the part of the atmosphere that is further from the surface, and is composed of a mixture of hydrogen, helium, and neon.

The atmosphere is the source of the heat that drives the movement of the crust. The atmosphere is at a temperature of about 1000 degrees Celsius, and is surrounded by a layer of solid matter, which is called the crust. The crust is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum, and is at a temperature of about 500 degrees Celsius. The crust is the outermost layer of the globe, and is the layer that we live on.

The atmosphere is the source of the heat that drives the movement of the crust. The atmosphere is at a temperature of about 1000 degrees Celsius, and is surrounded by a layer of solid matter, which is called the crust. The crust is composed of a mixture of silicon, oxygen, and aluminum, and is at a temperature of about 500 degrees Celsius. The crust is the outermost layer of the globe, and is the layer that we live on.

- JC: were open to Negroes in those days -- or Blacks. They were busboys and waiters. That's a lot to aspire to, isn't it? And doormen. Invariably the doormen were very tall and fair-skinned.
- JW: How did the family celebrate Christmas?
- JC: Oh, we had a ball at Christmas time. We gave gifts and had a Christmas tree, just like anyone else -- and we went to church. We also had a tradition, almost as firmly set as the Cosmos Club, called the Christmas Morning Breakfast Dance. Fifty ladies, all prominent socially in the Black community... in the "Negro" community -- it's just natural to say "Black"... would give this beautiful Breakfast Dance. It would start about ten and ran to about one on Christmas morning. It usually was at the California Club, 1750 Clay. It was called the California Club, but it was on Clay Street. Everybody put on their finest and went. And we had a Grand March. We had ham and bacon and eggs and coffee. And everybody saw everybody, and it was just delightful -- just delightful. But those days are long gone.
- JW: How did you feel about having to go to church?
- JC: I liked it. There were always boys there and it was a social center. My father was the only restless one. He never wanted to stay and talk. But we enjoyed church. It was a way to meet our friends. The church had benefits and socials. That was one place where you could fraternize or meet boys and your mother didn't disapprove. I've always liked boys... and men. Still do.
- JW: Did they have Baptist Training Union?
- JC: You mean BYTU?
- JW: Yes, whatever it was.
- JC: Well we had Christian Endeavor, because we were Methodists, you see.
- JW: Oh, I see.
- JC: The BYTU was Baptist. And Baptists are the largest denomination, among the Blacks, even today. You look in the Sun-Reporter: there's two full pages of Baptist churches, and the Methodists are very much fewer in number. But Mother and Dad joined the Methodist church.
- JW: But you don't remember any feelings of discomfort or rebellion against this general pattern?
- JC: Oh, no. We enjoyed it. The only rebellion we ever had was that I had to practice French, and I had to give up skating and practice the piano, and had to study, study, study. Always study. Had to get a hundred, not ninety-eight, one hundred. Get the top grades, etcetera, ~~etcetera~~.

JW: Were your birthdays considered special occasions? Did you do something special on birthdays?

JC: No. We never had a birthday party. We always got gifts from my parents, but we never had "birthdays." I think it was because of my mother's preoccupation with avoiding age. The only time she would mention age was because both my sister and I got out of school at precocious ages, and she liked to brag about that. But other than that, she didn't even want my father's age put in the paper when he died. She had a thing against age. She said it meant you were on the scrapheap when you got a certain age, and if you didn't divulge it, then you wouldn't have to lie about it later. I think she got that from my grandfather who was quite a gay person in his late seventies. I mean full of fun and frolic. After my grandmother died he also had a lady friend. But he was a terrific person. He had what the French call joie de vivre.

JW: What were the festivals celebrated generally in the neighborhood or in the city?

JC: Well, we liked Chinese New Year because then you could go down to Sing Fats or -- see, we only lived a couple of blocks from Chinatown -- and you got lichee nuts and melon candy and little banners they gave to the kids. So we loved Chinese New Year. Also we liked Chinese funerals because there was always a long procession and big pictures. It was quite a spectacle.

I also liked some of the Catholic festivals, because most of my childhood friends were either Jewish or Italian. We'd go down to St. Peter and Paul Church, where Joe DiMaggio, incidentally, was married. Also where the bomber was once located -- the man that insanely tried to destroy the church. We would like the Christian festivals, you know, the Catholic festivals.

Oh, and Jewish New Year we used to like because we had friends who were Jewish, the Kaplans across the street. And they would have matzo's and they would have... sometimes we'd go to a seder. That's when we were older. Bar Mitzvah. We were fortunate in that I've always had the richness of other cultures in our lives.

Then, of course, when we moved from Jackson Street to Pine Street, I met my dear, dear friend Michi, and Naq, Japanese sisters. Their father started the Japanese press here, and I think the Oka's have been my dearest friends always. Michi's name is Onuma now, and she's the English editor for Hokubei Manichi, na, I'm sorry, Nichibei Times. His name is Moria. She's retired. Seems funny now to be retired.

My mother used to let us go to the show with Michi. Michi was older. She used to take us to the old Temple Theater on Fillmore to see Sesu Hayakawa who was a great screen idol in those days. It was one of those serials -- you know, it went on every Saturday. I loved Michi. We get together periodically. This is a very strong love. I think of her much more warmly than I do my own sister. We're

JC: closer. I just adore Michi.

JW: Besides her and your father, do you recall who were your childhood heroes or heroines?

JC: I loved the Waverly novels and I loved the stories of queens, like Marie Antoinette and Cleopatra and so on. So my heroes and heroines were in books. They still are, I guess. Because then you don't get disappointed. They're there. And I think Little Women. I read Little Women when I was about six years old. My grandfather had me reading so early and I've always loved to read. I'm not a speed reader. But once I read it, boy, I remember it.

I guess my ethnic heroes -- I didn't have much consciousness of ethnicity in those days -- but I guess my ethnic hero was... I guess Walter White was my great hero because I knew him personally. I used to be one of the hostesses for the NAACP teas we had here -- famous "teas" Chester Garrard had. They used to pick young girls to hostess, and eventually I used to help plan them and pick the other girls that were to help. And Walter White was my hero. He was the Field Secretary of the NAACP.

Lester Granger was another one of my loves. But that's when I was a little older. Of course he was the Urban League. Fascinating man. Charming. European style. Cosmopolite. Oh, the epitome of sophisticated charm. Every once in a while my husband will say, "What do you expect? I'm no Lester Granger." Oh, boy. If things had been different, I would have married that man. Oh, he was a doll. Not that I don't adore my husband. But I mean if I had been born earlier. He was older. And if he hadn't been married... If, if, if, if. I love to "if" sometimes.

JW: Well, on the subject of "if"-ing, what were your fantasies as a girl of what you would be?

JC: A teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher.

JW: Always?

JC: Always. We used to play games and I was always the teacher. Always wanted to be a teacher. I love teaching. I love school and I like kids. I guess at heart I'll always be a teacher. I don't know why -- I wander around school every once in a while now. But everybody stops and comes running and asks things. It's not the same. I'd like to just go and not be known. So maybe I'll go over to Oakland and wander around once in a while. But I love school.

And I've had such marvelous kids. I got this old book out. This photograph was in 1962, when you were still being wheeled around in your baby carriage. This was right here in this room. We had a class then... (I was a regular teacher.)

JC: And I called it the English Lab because the kids ran it. We were selected as the People to People Outstanding Class in the nation. This was taken right here -- we were welcoming international teachers. There I am, of course, and my husband. These are students and a faculty member. So we've always had fun like that, you know. That's one of the reasons we bought the house, because I wanted to do things that I didn't want to do in a school environment.

I've done a lot of movie work -- Educational events with motion picture production. I spent seven summers going to MGM workshops. All promotions were non-fee, but we got all sorts of stars -- Sidney Poitier, Stanley Kramer, Tony Curtis. Vincent Price is one of our honorary members of the class. They would come out to class and we'd present them. They've been in this house, many of them.

And it's just absolutely delightful. Then, from the early days we knew "Rochester's" family -- Eddie Anderson. Because his father sang in our church choir and his younger brother... Lloyd was his younger brother... Cornelius was his older brother who was in "Green Pastures." We used to skate together. So he would route a number of people this way... So, I've had a delightful life.

JW: Sounds wonderful.

JC: Yes. It really is. You know every once in a while I think [to myself], "You must be kind of sappy or superficial or ebullient or a happy sort of pollyanna type." I've had sorrows too. Don't think I haven't had many problems. But, on the whole, I'm extremely grateful. I only regret one thing: I'm envious because you picked a better time to be born. Things are really happening. And doggone it...

It's like that classroom picture. Anecdote: The teacher was trying to get a little boy to buy a third-grade class picture of all the little kids. Everybody bought one but this one little boy. So she said, "Now look, Ronnie. You can point when you're older and you can say, 'Now there's Sadie. She's a dancer now. And there's Johnny. He's the head of the bank. And there's so and so and so.'" And he says, "And there's teacher -- and she's dead!" (Laughter) So, I'd love to be around to be able to go to the moon or outer space, and to see a Black man as President of the United States -- even a woman some day. So you'll be able to see that.

JW: I hope so.

JC: So when it happens you can say, "Well, the old gal was right. I'll enjoy it for her." Because I'll be long gone.

JW: Do you remember any teachers specifically?

JC: Oh, yes. I remember all my teachers. I loved them. I didn't have as many as some, but I remember my Jean Parker teachers: Miss Casey and Miss Beeson and Madame Pechain, the principal, and Mrs. Laura Pearson, our eighth-grade teacher.

- JC: Oh, I remember them well. Then I can cite all the people at Girls' High School in whose classes I was. They were darling, darling, darling. I only had one man teacher, and that was Mr. Offio, who was Jack Oakey's uncle really. Jack Oakey, the star. He's dead now too... Sorry, most of the people I knew are dead. That's what inevitably happens. Not the younger ones, but I mean the older ones. This one man teacher taught us French. But other than that, they were all women in those days.
- JW: Why was there an emphasis on French? You said one of the things you studied was French.
- JC: Way back in the family there were some French, and I think a great-great-great-grandmother came from France in the early, early days... to come here and be a singer and dancer. But she became a seamstress. I'm not sure whether that was Mother's fantasy, or whether it was true. But, anyway, Mother adores French, and painting on china -- you know, hand-painted china. I never learned to paint on the china, and my sister neither.

But both of us became adept at foreign languages. My sister's even more fluent in languages than I. She's more linguistically talented. Hers is Spanish mostly. She became head of the Spanish department and eventually went to the University of California at Berkeley, and then became a dean. Now she doesn't teach. But her languages are French, Spanish, and Portuguese. My niece took Russian -- very good in Russian. And had worked for airlines and so forth, you know, interpreting. She's quite a gal too. She took a teacher's credential. But there were no jobs. So she works in industry.

- JW: Did you have pets?

- JC: Yes. I had a dog. Oh, I loved my little dog. Mother wasn't so keen on Judy. (My dog's name was Judy.) That's my niece's name too -- no connection. But one day I came back from the University... She used to start barking when the streetcar would turn around the corner. She somehow or another knew I was on it. And one day I came home, and Mother said she was gone. I'm ashamed to admit that I always suspected Mother opened the gate. She wasn't very keen on Judy.

Mother never believed that you should spend any night out of your own bed. You were always home. But when my sister came along, which was five years later, we were able to wangle Mother into letting us stay for her senior year in Berkeley, which was good. So she got away from home. But I've always lived at home -- 'til I got married. So I've never had the out of the home experience, which I think everybody should have. Look how far you've come. (Laughs)

- JW: What types of chores were you...?

- JC: Not too many. My mother believed we should study, and practice, and she'd do the chores. I always sewed. I made Mother's clothes because Mother in those days

JC: was very heavy and she was short. She couldn't get what she wanted. But we used to have a regular routine that we were responsible for our rooms. My mother said that we should do the dishes on the weekend, or sweep the kitchen. But as we got older we always had phone calls. (Laughs) Mother would say, "I think you're telling those boys to call at this particular time." She'd answer the phone, "No, she's busy." But she'd always call us [to the phone].

JW: Did the other girls find that strange?

JC: Yes. We weren't very popular in this respect. We had friends, and they were loyal, but you couldn't have anything to drink in our house. And Mother didn't like smoking. So they'd say, "Look, can you get out of the house, or can you come to such and such a party?" and so on.

In those days weenie roasts were very popular. You'd get a permit from the fire department, build a bonfire out at the beach and roast hot dogs. I used to love to skate. I skated all through college, roller skates. We skated out to the beach. In those days the sand was kept off, and there was a playland out there, all sorts of concessions. It was a lively place. It wasn't until we were older that we got permission to do those things.

JW: Did you have a nickname?

JC: Jo. And my sister was always called Phil.

JW: Did anybody in your family ever come into contact -- referring back to celebrities -- with Mary Ellen Pleasant, "Mammy" Pleasant?

JC: Yes. My grandmother. She and my grandmother both patronized the same Chinese lottery man. My mother said when she was a little girl, she remembered my grandmother won an eight-spot, which was quite a bit of money. And when they went to get the money the laundry was closed and the Chinese person was gone. (Laughs) So my grandmother was very upset. But "Mammy" Pleasant -- everybody called her then -- Mammy Pleasant was a familiar figure, my mother said. My mother was a little kid, you know, running on the streets and playing. And the kids would see her [Pleasant] and they'd all run, because she always wore black and they thought she was "voo-doo."

JW: Did she describe her?

JC: She didn't remember her very well, because I tried to get a description. She said she very vaguely... she was afraid of her, she knew that.

JW: As a child was there anything that might particularly provoke you to anger?

JC: I was sort of a docile kind of a dumb person. Didn't get angry too much. I think the only time I'd ever get angry is when somebody called me a "gawk" -- you

JC: know I was tall. Or people would say, "How much more are you going to grow? How tall you've become!" So I began hunching over, you know, to be shorter. That's the only thing that really made me angry.

Or, I remember once being angry when I was on the streetcar. This was before World War II. I was on a streetcar going down to the Emporium -- that was the 21 Hayes car. And some people got on -- we used to have those side seats -- and I was sitting next to the window. The seat next to me was vacant, and then there was a seat across the way. These two women and a man got on. So the man stood up, and my seat was vacant and the two women sat down. We'd gone a few blocks, and then another woman got on and she sat with me. Then I heard one of these first ones who got on say very loudly, quite audibly, "You see, they do sit with niggers here!" And that, wow! I still remember that -- We were getting right near Broderick Street when that happened. I still remember that. And it really hit me. I think that's the most blatant example I ever had of prejudice. So.

JW: I think that we'll stop for now, because you have to go to Japan Town.

JC: Oh, yes. I'd forgotten about that.

..... END TAPE

BEGIN TAPE 2:4:1 (SECOND SESSION - MAY 17, 1978)

JW: Well, last time we made a trip through childhood and now we're breaking into adolescence.

JC: Right, right.

JW: What were your favorite subjects at Girls' High?

JC: English, French, History of Art, History.

JW: What didn't you like?

JC: Mathematics. Geometry. I didn't mind algebra, but I don't think I've ever understood geometry.

JW: Did you keep a diary in high school?

JC: No.

JW: Was that customary?

JC: I don't know. People still keep diaries. I never have. I don't know, I just never did it.

JW: Do you consider yourself... do you think you were frivolous? Were you into clothes and gossip?

JC: No, no. I look back at my wasted youth regretfully. I was one of these darling little girls who did everything that she could tell her mother about and never broke the rules. Very unimaginative, uncreative. I think too, being four and a half years younger than the other girls (to five years sometimes) kind of put me in a miserable sociological position. So I was wearing shoes that laced up high and long stockings when they were wearing high heels and that sort of thing. It makes a difference always being singled out as sort of a kind of a freaky gal because I was younger, so that I don't know. Then when I went to college I lived at home. So, no... Then when opportunities presented themselves, it was too late: my habit pattern was set. It's a pain to be virtuous. (Laughs)

JW: Did you feel it then or is this retrospectively?

JC: This is retrospectively.

JW: Basically you felt...

JC: Well, I felt restricted in that the rules were pretty strict at home, and the rules were that so long as you were under this roof you abide by the rules. Even if you have to read a book that's in the reserve book room, your dinner is at six o'clock and you be here. The fact that you have to cross the bridge and all has nothing to do with it. You be here. The fact also that my parents had had very little contact with college life [meant that] they didn't know much of anything about it. So they weren't very realistic.

I say "they." It's my mother. My father went along; he was a doll. (Laughs)
I think my mother had an innate fear that all places away from home were essentially a threat, or wicked or something. So, anyhow...

JW: Did they often disagree in front of you about that kind of thing?

JC: No. My mother ruled the roost. There was never any contention. Whatever Mother said, that was it: Final.

JW: How did she feel about your father having to be out for society weddings and that kind of thing?

JC: Well, she understood that, because she knew that Dad was doing it to bring more money into the house so we could have more things, and travel, or whatever. And she was very appreciative of that. Although in later years... Up to the time he died he was active; in his later years, though -- he was in his sixties -- then he became the gate-greeter at the old Seals' Stadium for the Seals. (They were then called the Seals baseball team.) And she kind of felt lonely then, because we were both ^{out} of the house then. She'd say, "Your father's always away. He works

JC: more now than he did when he was younger. I wish he'd stay home a little bit more." She did notice it then. But she was very greatly churched, and she belonged to the Federated Women's Club, and she always had an officer's position.

She was very active until she was stricken with Parkinson's Disease, unfortunately. She went to meetings all the time -- and I bless my husband for this -- he'd always try to take her somewhere, or I would pick her up, or she got there through other people's help. He was very devoted to her. He did everything to help her. Really more than a son would be expected to do.

JW: In school, did you feel in any way restricted on account of being a woman... a girl?

JC: No. I was so busy trying to toe the line with the restrictions at home and avoid all the things my mother hated that, no, no I didn't. We didn't have that consciousness then. That's another regret I have. We seemed to be very docile and accepting.

I admire your generation. It's great, wonderful. People a little bit older than you that I know who were in the schools and colleges in the Sixties, you know, with the protesters and the rebels (sic), and so forth. I knew Tracy Sims, who led the sit-in strike on Van Ness Avenue to get Blacks employed on Auto Row, etcetera. And I knew some of the people... sounds like we had a friend come in [refers to a flying insect]: he won't live long. I knew some of the people at State University. Then Carlton Goodlett's a good friend of mine and a contemporary. Carlton was out there marching with them, too. He's a great guy.

JW: He wasn't born here though was he?

JC: Dr. Goodlett. No. He came here. I don't know where Carlton was born. Somewhere in Ohio I think. We never mention it. Because he came here in his early undergraduate years and has always been here. Terrific brain you know. He had his M.D. and his Ph.D. by his twenty-third birthday.

JW: Wow. I heard him speak once: it was very impressive.

JC: And he's always been a rebel. He's just great. I admire him tremendously. The only thing we ever quarrel about is his taste in hats. He wears the funniest hats. (Laughs) But I love him -- he's marvelous.

JW: You grew up, you said, in the Cosmos Club. Was this a substantial part of your life when you were in high school?

JC: Well, no. It was more my parents' life. I did go to the affairs, and when I got older I used to be mistress of ceremonies for their so-called "cultural workshops," etcetera. It was always there, yes. But it wasn't a substantial part of life. I guess I was into young things. I loved to skate. I was a pretty good roller-skater.

JW: Where did you do that?

JC: Out at the beach, in the streets. If we had a roller rink, we never went. We used to race up and down the Great Highway. And we had weenie roasts. Those were the thing then. You had to get a permit from the fire department and you could build the bonfire at the beach. All the kids got long sticks and hot dogs and we used to roast them in the fire. One of the parents was always there. They'd have rolls and potato salad and whatnot. And we'd sing. Some of the fellows had ukeleles. One fellow had a banjo. But that was kind of "Negroid," so we didn't encourage that. (Chuckle) We used to go on hikes to Muir Woods and Tamalpais.

Never was much for swimming because my hair was curly. I didn't want it to get what my mother called "kinky," so I didn't go in swimming much. Had to learn to swim to graduate from college, but that was it. But skating was my great love. In fact, I skated until almost the time I was married. I still have a backward look once in a while at the skates, which I gave away.

JW: You said that the Cosmos Club sometimes had forums. Do you know the kinds of things that were discussed?

JC: Yes, yes. They would often have a forum on current literature or book reviews or current issues. I remember some of the forums on redevelopment of the city -- Mayor Robinson was in City Hall then -- on redeveloping the Fillmore area... what low-cost housing might mean to the city... how high-rises should be restricted so we didn't lose any of our famous views.

Then, quite often we would skirt on the edge of ethnic problems. But they weren't fully developed then. Although we did have times when the NAACP national officers were out here, where there would be a joint meeting of the NAACP and the forum committee. People like Walter White and -- what was the other man's name? -- Kelly Miller. People like that would sort of educate us because we were kids then... educate us on what was going on. I remember as a girl hearing about the Scottsboro Boys. We had to collect money, and we set aside some of the money for their case. Things like that. It was pretty relevant for the times.

JW: The Scottsboro case was backed by the NAACP?

JC: Oh, yes.

JW: I got the impression that the Communist Party paid a lot of attention to it.

JC: Well, they did. They paid a lot of attention to everything that they thought they could get into. But the case was argued by NAACP lawyers, not Communist lawyers.

JW: How did one get into the Cosmos Club? Did it tend to just pass down through the family?

JC: Well, I don't know exactly. But it was supposed to be anyone who was socially prominent and "acceptable." It was established by Uncle Bill, I mean William Henry Lashly, and the Colonel, Colonel Lee, and Rockford Chambers and my father.

JC: With their wives, I guess they sort of were social... Oh, and Walter Sandford too. I forgot him. He was the mayor's page, and chauffeur. I think that they sort of were 'social dictators,' you know. They invited people. And other people recommended for membership. They were voted on by the board. I didn't pay much attention to details then. But that's the way it was done.

JW: You said the last time that your mother insisted that you wait until you were eighteen before you could date.

JC: Right, right. I got around that a bit. The group dates she didn't mind, like the weenie roasts and the skating parties. Then we went to Sunday School at Zion Church. Although that was not Bethel, there were more kids there. So we went there. Then my folks would pick us up and we'd go on over to Bethel to the eleven o'clock service. Yeah, that's true, that's true. However, when I was in college, I was away from home -- during the day anyway. So things could happen then -- you could have dates then. I remember... I guess my ultimate mortification was when I was invited to the Alpha Phi Alpha formal and my father took me. (Chuckle)

JW: What did "dates" consist of in those days?

JC: Oh, that's impossible to answer because dates differed as much then as they do now. It depended on the persons. But I guess, in the accepted term, you were invited somewhere by a young man. I had a good friend, Elmer Graves, who was into ice hockey. So a date with him was always to go see an ice hockey game. Then maybe you'd have something afterwards to eat.

Quite often... I don't know if it was the general pattern... but I know quite often we would double-date, and then go to our house: we always had lots of food, and we'd have something to eat and play the record player -- which is still downstairs; it's a curio now. It plays eight records at a time. That was something then.

Oh, I don't know... Only a few of the fellows had cars, so we didn't have that big horror [of unsupervised adolescent contact] that later generations had. We rode the buses a lot, and when there was a date... Gee, my two friends are dead now. Well, there were two fellows that always went out on dates, and they always invited me and another girl. Sometimes the girls changed, but I was always there. They had a car between them. We used to go across the Bay.

Most of our social life in the later years was across the Bay, because that's where the concentration of young people happened to be. Then college associations kind of fostered that too. I used to go over every Sunday that it occurred -- that was twice a month -- to what was known as the Lyceum, on Linden Street. That was the old YMCA. It was "intellectual," but of course it was a good meeting place. Good excuse to get away from the family too. I used to go by myself

JC: because there was no one over here that went to school over there. That was fun.

JW: Did Michi ever double-date with you?

JC: No. Japanese ~~girls~~ at that time only dated Japanese fellows, and there was a strict parental control. So, there was no commonality of social interests there. We're just personally good friends. But our social lives were widely divergent as we got older. We get together now regularly, but there was [then] no commonality except in our "causes." We're very interested in similar causes.

Michi's campaigning for me to get this job at City Hall, which I don't know whether I will get or not, although the Mayor has committed himself. Yesterday, when I went to this big meeting to explain the merger of the old... Well, I won't go into those details. But I was introduced to a man who is supposedly the new director of the Sister Cities Programs. My old boss, that I worked with at the State Department, is the one pushing him.

Of course, he fills all the requirements -- he's rich, a male, and European-oriented. But, pardon my English, it's going to be "one hell of a fight" if the Mayor forgets his commitment to me and appoints him. I really don't think the Mayor will. Because I went out to the big awards assembly at Pelton Junior High and the Mayor was there. And in front of the Board of Education president, who is a personal friend, and Ted Carroll, the principal of the school, and my husband Audley, and the Mayor's bodyguard, he said, "Why haven't I appointed you? You certainly must be appointed. It will take a week or ten days, but you'll have it." Now I don't think after that kind of a performance he's going to go back on it.

But if he does, he'll be very sorry. Because first of all I am a female, and I am Black. And the Mayor can't afford to deteriorate any more in the eyes of the Black population. He would be out of his cotton-picking mind if he goes back on his word now.

I really think this old gal is trying to bulldoze this fellow in because he's very rich. (He's the retiring PR man for Standard Oil.) He never had any experience in the international field that we're talking about. He's had thirty-seven years with Standard Oil. And I think that she's now trying to make all kinds of contacts. She's the Deputy Chief of Protocol for the city. But that's a non-paying job. She's second to Cyril Magnin. Of course, you're not a native here, or you haven't lived here long enough, to know that the Magnin name is magic in San Francisco.

JW: I've gathered that much.

JC: Lots of clout. He's seventy-seven years old, but he's still the active president of the Magnin store. He's the Chief of Protocol. But he's old, and he's feeble, and of course she's doing all the leg work. I know she isn't doing it just for a

JC: sweet smile because she lives beyond her means. She says so. So, I think this man wants the job for the honor to it, I guess. Couldn't be any other reason.

But you know, to be so insensitive: she knows I'm a candidate for the job and she acts like I don't exist. "Oh, Josephine, I want you to meet the new director of the Sister Cities Program. Mr. Ballo, this is Josephine Cole, who really knows more about Sister Cities than anybody. You're going to have to lean on her heavily. Blah, blah, blah, blah. If somebody hit me between the eyes I wouldn't have been more surprised. But I tried to pull a poker face. "How do you do? Very pleased to meet you." And move on. Oh, that witch -- spelled with a "b." (Laughs) Don't put that on the tape. But that's the kind of thing that happens in this city.

JW: It happens in every city.

JC: I suppose it does. I'm only conversant with this city. But I don't think the Mayor will welch on his word. I don't think even he will do that.

JW: Do you think that... Going back to high school again...

JC: Yes, oh yes.

JW: Were people cliquish? Was there a lot of social competition to be in a group and to be invited to certain persons' parties?

JC: Well, I was a again on the fringe. Not for age difference this time, but for ethnic difference. Because I went to Girls' High School, which was an elite... it was the intellectual school comparable to Lowell. Lowell was there and it was intellectual. Girls' was intellectual and elite because only girls went there. That's why it's called Girls' High School. And the predominance [majority] of the people there were rich, Jewish girls. It was not uncommon to see a line of limousines -- and they were limousines -- lined up at the school entrance at time to go to school and the chauffeurs holding the doors while the kids got out. That was not uncommon at all.

A number of them knew my father as Joe Shreve. So, sometimes they would call me "Josie" Shreve, which I got to hate! Oh, they'd be so patronizing, you know, because I was the only Black gal in the school for about a year. Then another girl transferred, a darling girl. We used to have these dreary dances at noon where one girl was dancing with another girl. So she and I used to dance together, which was nice. The only time I ever got picked was when we had relays or something, because I could run fairly fast. So they would pick you for what you could do for the team. But, socially, I just didn't exist. That was the way it was.

There were a few other kids in the school who weren't rich Jews, but not too many. They must have been about fifty per cent of the population. As I look back now, and I've done some checking in old records at the Board, the faculty of that school was largely Jewish. I didn't understand it at that time. I loved

JC: them. They were great. We had a very good faculty. We got a good education. My English teachers I adored. They were wonderful. I really enjoyed Girls' High School, aside from the social ostracism. I didn't know any better than to think 'that's the way it was.' That's the way I'd always been used to it.

JW: How did girls go about getting sex education in those days?

JC: I hate to admit how little we had. Well... Science was required for one year, but that was mostly biology. We did study about frogs. But that's about it. When you asked your mother, she said, "Well, you'll learn soon enough." How, I don't know. She never said. And I wasn't scientifically inclined. I had a horror at the University of taking all those courses I should have taken before I went to Cal. We didn't have any counseling much about college. I remember getting bogged down in astronomy, which I still never understood. How I ever passed it, I don't know. I loved botany; got a good mark in that. And that was long... I had those hours of lab work.

You didn't [get a formal sex education]. You just surmised and wondered, and so forth and so on.

JW: Were you very concerned with it, as concerned as people seem to be today?

JC: No, no. It wasn't lady-like. But when I got to college -- which of course would have been at high school age -- then it began to interest me. I look back now and think of some of the freaky ideas I had. It interested me a great deal. But I was scared to ask. And I didn't seem to take any courses that were very illuminating. I guess everybody assumed everybody knew -- I don't know. But no, there wasn't the preoccupation.

We were in mourning: a great idol had died, Rudolph Valentino. And it was as if all sex had discontinued for a while. It was so romantic, this lady in black who went to his tomb with the flowers. And his former wife, Natasha Rambova... I remember her name yet. Vilma Banke was prostrate with grief. And so was everybody else.

Then, I don't know, we liked music. But it [our activity connected with music] was dull, too, I guess. I loved seeing Bing Crosby. And the Inkspots, I liked. And Ella Fitzgerald, of course. And the big bands... enjoyed big bands. Not to dance to particularly, but to go to their concerts when they came out here. It wasn't uncommon to stand around in big circles and listen. A few people danced. I guess the only wicked thing we ever did in my bunch -- that I ever did anyway -- was to sneak out on Sunday afternoon when I was supposed to be at the library. The library stayed open on Sundays then. (Some of them do now, but not many.)

I used to sneak out to "dansants." They would be -- what a name! -- they would be at some kid's house. A lot of kids all packed together trying to dance to some little squeaky music. Then we'd get some usually pretty good food. You'd have

JC: to nervously watch your watch to make the time the time you would have spent at the library, and then streak home. I never told my mother that. That's about the worst thing I can ever think of I ever did. I didn't do that too often because I was too scared of getting caught -- then I knew I'd 'get it.'

My mother had a heavy hand anyway and I didn't want to get... One time she took after me with a hairbrush -- I can't remember now what it was about. It was about something after leaving church. (Bethel Church was over near Chinatown then.) I was supposed to come right home on the cable car and I didn't; some kids and I went down to Chinatown and had some Chinese food. I don't care for Chinese food, but I liked the company. And the Coleman boys were in the group. They were handsome, exciting. Oh, my, Sammy's now an undertaker, and he's got arthritis and he's overweight; but he was so dashing in those days -- oh, was he dashing! He was in the bunch. We kind of had sort of a friendship going.

So when I got home, my mother was waiting, and she put that hairbrush on me unmercifully -- I can remember to this day. My sister said, "I thought she was going to kill you!" She got scared. My mother was a very stern woman. I admired her, respected her, feared her.

JW: How old were you then?

JC: Oh, I think I was about fourteen and a half -- almost fifteen. But I was tall for my age.

JW: Was that the last corporal punishment you received?

JC: Oh, heck no. She'd land on the side of us [strike us] in our twenties -- she believed in 'letting you know' -- or she'd throw a dish at you sometimes. But my sister, Phyllis, said she had emotional problems. We didn't realize it [then]. I guess she did. My mother was a strange person. I look back now... I wish I had had more scientific knowledge then than I have now. I guess she was rebelling against her father, my grandfather, whom I adored: he was a bon vivant, he got drunk at times, he lived it up, he had lady friends. And my mother was so puritanical and righteous and upright. I think she was rebelling against him, I don't know what.

She was extremely authoritarian. There was no point of view but hers in the house. I can remember when we were younger we'd go to the show, my sister and I, and my mother. My father would go to the lodge and then come back later and pick us up at the show -- he was very devoted. And we'd like to see certain parts over, you know. But Mama got up... if she didn't like a show, she'd get up before it was over, and we had to leave, of course. And there was never any question about it.

But, thanks to her, we got an amazing amount of knowledge. My sister, as I told you, is the genius in the family. I think she was about second to none in

JC: French grammar. I don't know if that's a big thrill, but that's the way it is. (Chuckle) And I know I learned a lot that I never would have -- in books rather -- if it hadn't been for her keeping us on the ball. We never got into any social difficulties -- not because we were so greatly puned for anything. We just were scared to do anything my mother wouldn't approve.

JW: What was she saving you from?

JC: I don't know. There weren't any "chances" here, as they used to say, matrimonially. All the girls that did well, like the Newmans or other people that were socially prominent, they always sent their daughters to Washington, D.C., or somewhere, for the summer or for a social season, where they would meet other people. But in looking back, I think none of them had the durable marriages we did. (Laugh) But there just weren't very many chances, from a mother's point of view. After all, Dr. Goodlett could only marry once, or once at a time anyway. He's never remarried. He only had the one wife, the one son. He's been divorced for many years -- never remarried.

JW: Is your sister... What was your relationship like as girls?

JC: Well, we had a good relationship except that we were competitive in this way: my mother would say, "Well, you know your sister would never do that." Or she would use what Phyllis did to spur me on. She pitted us against each other. Since there were five years and three months difference between us, there was enough competition that sometimes I guess we were at each other's throat. We also had this... when you're younger, as you know, five years makes a difference in your sets of friends.

We used to give parties together when we got older and sometimes we even went out on dates together. We used to date Eddie Albert and Alvie Spooner. Eddie Albert was the first Black highway patrolman in California, a beautiful young man, Creole. He looked more like a Mexican, so my mother liked him. His cousin, Alvie Spooner, who was a little bit younger -- who, incidentally, was in the army with Audley later on. (We didn't know Audley in those days, he wasn't here, he was in Pittsburgh.)

But, anyway, it's a guarded, friendly relationship, you know, because we were pitted against each other. I had been the only child in the family for five years and was not prepared at all... I'm told that I told some weird story about my mother had pneumonia so she had to go to the hospital, but she came back with my sister. But it was a good relationship. It still is. But it's remote, you know -- we're not this [extremely] close. Of course, we don't live in the same city. But we're loyal to each other.

JW: You never allied to protect each other against your mother?

JC: Yes, yes. Oh, yes. We had an adorable little dog. It was given to my sister.

JC: But the dog sort of took to me, I guess because I liked the dog. She had long hair. So my mother had a dictum that the dog stayed downstairs, never upstairs. When Mother went down to Clement Street, which was the shopping street, she walked, and it took a while. Then we'd have signals, you know, and Judy could come upstairs and play with us. Then it would be my turn to vacuum up the hairs, or Phyllis' turn.

One time my mother caught us. Then we both took the blame. She didn't know which one, so she didn't punish either of us. She said, "Well you lie together, you hussies!" I can remember it so well. "I don't know which is which." That's why I'm sure she let Judy out that day that she supposedly ran away, which broke my heart. But anyway, yeah, we would have lied together.

FOR REASONS YET UNKNOWN, THE SECOND HALF HOUR OF THE ORIGINAL INTERVIEW SESSION WAS EFFECTIVELY RUINED DURING THE DUPLICATION PROCESS. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE MORE COGENT QUOTES WERE GLEANED FROM THE TAPE BY THE INTERVIEWER AND FORM APPENDIX A. ALSO, THE TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE SAID HALF-HOUR WERE REVIEWED IN A FOURTH SESSION (TAPE 3:4:2)

BEGIN TAPE 3:4:1

JC: [My sister had] ... a different orientation. She went to Lowell. She had good counseling. She'd already picked her language speciality, and she didn't care... she did pretty good in science. She wasn't great in science, but she had B's in it. So that was good enough. She had those advantages. As I said, she's the brilliant one in the family. She would deny that. But we're very different. She's very academic, very straight down the line academic -- academic, academic, academic. Really marvelous scholar. A tremendous person, really. My husband doesn't like her -- off record -- but that's his problem. (Laughs)

JW: Do you remember anything special about the fact of Prohibition? (I know you were quite young then.) I mean besides the fact that you had prohibition in your home all the time.

JC: It never affected us because there was never any drinking in the house. My mother never allowed any when we had parties either, in later years. No, only I remember very vaguely that everybody was so happy... I guess it was Roosevelt who brought back beer and wine and all that. I don't know when it was repealed even.

JW: It was before Roosevelt.

JC: Was it before Roosevelt?

JW: About '28 or so.

JC: Oh, I see. Well, yeah, he went in in '33 -- '32 rather. I can remember people saying "it's a good thing because now people won't be dying from drinking that rotgut or that poison. And no more bathtub gin."

My father had a friend named Gus Oliva, big shot in North Beach. He established the Exposition Grotto among other things. But he was a -- what do you call it? -- a bootlegger. And he asked my dad to come in with him. My mother said, "Oh, you don't go near those people!" Put up some money, you know. If he had, my dad would have been a millionaire. Although in later years Gus Oliva got killed... somebody killed him. They never found out who. That was years and years later, early Forties. So my mother said, "See?" She remembered all those years. "See?" My father said that [Oliva's death] wasn't related [to the earlier business proposition]. I don't know.

Of course, there were so many Italians in San Francisco that it did have some effect on... you know, they were into the bootlegging, and there were speakeasies and that sort of thing. I think there were even some Black speakeasies. But I was young, and I don't remember much about it. With my churchgoing family, it [Prohibition] didn't mean much.

JW: How did you feel about the bridges?

JC: Oh, great, marvelous! The day the bridges opened was 1938? Yeah, '38. We walked across Golden Gate Bridge. Bobby was young then... Bobby Fisher. And Bobby wanted to take his skates, and he couldn't do it. Nor his bicycle. Then we went to Treasure Island. We practically lived over there during the Fair.

Then the last year of the Fair was when I met Audley. He had come out with Joe Louis' group as a young guy to cook. He's always been a good cook. Cook and run errands and do stuff, you know, in the camp. And he came up to see what San Francisco was like. And he's been here ever since, I'm glad to say. It was through the Cosmos Club that we met. He drove his landlady to the meeting because she was elderly and couldn't get there. I happened to be mistress of ceremonies at that... it was one of the forums. And that's how we met.

JW: Did anyone regret that the ferries were no longer going to be there?

JC: Yes. They were supposed to be a colorful part of the city's life and so forth. They kept the ferries for some time after the bridges were completed. And you could use the ferry optionally. But, of course, they didn't make any money much. Then people who lived, like in Tiburon or Belvedere or even Sausalito, I think, they patronized the ferries. Well, they still do... they still have ferries. Then the automobile boats kept up for a while because they had trains on the bridge, you know. I rode to school on the train, later. And there was automobile traffic. But nothing like it is now. Then they took the trains off, put the buses on, and made bigger ramps for the cars.

JW: Were these literal "trains" or streetcars?"

JC: No, there were trains.

JW: You had to go on Southern Pacific or something?

JC: Southern Pacific trains, yes. The big red cars.

JW: When you got to the other side of the bridge, what happened? How did you get to campus?

JC: On the train. The train kept on.

JW: Really?

JC: Yeah, it went over the bridge and on to where you were going. Different trains went different places. In the old days, when they had only the boats and no bridge, you got off the boat at the pier and took your train. That's when Duke Ellington wrote "Take the A Train" because the A Train went to West Oakland.

JW: Oh! I thought the "A Train" referred to the New York Subway [Lexington Avenue Line].

JC: No, no, no. It was the train to West Oakland, where all the Blacks were.

JW: Oh. What about the General Strike of 1934? Do you remember anything about that?

JC: No. Didn't worry about strikes then. I don't remember. They were always having trouble at the waterfront, I remember that. And Harry Bridges was always the hero. But I don't remember that. No. I was having fun then. '34. No, I don't remember any strike.

JW: Then, of course, the War. Did the Depression change your family's life?

JC: No, because my father was never out of work. He got the job at Shreve's and he stayed there. He was working there when I was born and he was working there until 1955, when he died. '54. He got sick in '54. So I never knew anything but Shreve's. We never had any Depression, no.

JW: What about the other families around you?

JC: Gee, I don't know. I wasn't socially inclined then. I guess they suffered. But people we knew didn't. They all worked. They all had jobs. Most of them were either in domestic service, or cooks -- like we knew the cook for Peter B. Kind, the author -- Richard Watson. Or like Chloe my godmother who worked for the Ponds, who had a big estate down in Hillsborough. They were friends of the Hearsts in those days. Everybody got along. It didn't seem to affect the people we knew.

JW: People weren't frightened by the possibility that the country's future was somewhat insecure?

JC: Well, if they were they didn't let us know. We never went without anything. We never had any problems financially.

I was working for Mary Louise McKannay then, whose mother always paid me more than I think was my due, because she liked the work and Mary Louise was happy, and she was extremely grateful. And they weren't poor. The father was a lawyer, Harry McKannay. He was a big Mason too, in spite of being a Catholic.

I wasn't affected by the Depression -- except the young people that we knew, as I told you, it was rare that they'd have a car -- if somebody had "wheels," as we used to say. I remember one fellow that had an old Hupmobile Six. He drove up to our house and he was going to take me out. I remember my mother saying, "You get in that contraption you'll never come back alive!" Or something like that. But I was very impressed, etcetera etcetera.

No, I guess we just didn't know enough to be that conscious of things. Of course, I knew from an economic point of view that the Depression was devastating and that some of the biggest people had jumped out of windows, and that economic recovery would take many years, and that the whole financial picture of the world was changing and the British Empire was beginning to deteriorate, and the pound sterling was not "next to God" anymore. But the dollar was sound, once we came back. Of course Roosevelt, for his time, was a great man. I don't know, I don't know. Then the War came and then things changed. The whole world changed. World War Two changed the whole world.

JW: The migrants who came out of the South, how did they affect the Black community that was here?

JC: Well, "the Negro community," the Cosmos type, looked at them with horrified fascination. And the story is told: that Mrs. Loving was on Grant Avenue, and in those days Grant Avenue was the place where you wore your white gloves and your hat, etcetera. She was looking in Shreve's window, and to her horrified gaze there appeared a Black man, in a hard hat, looking in at the silverware at the lower window. He was standing with a bag from which he was eating a donut. And so she couldn't contain herself anymore. She walked down and she said, "Pardon me, sir, but I've been in this city thirty years, and I've never seen anyone on Grant Avenue eating donuts from a bag. I hope you'll take it the right way." He looked at her, and he said, "Well, lady, I guess when I've been here thirty years I ain't gonna be eating no donuts neither." (Laughter) So maybe that typifies what happened.

But there were some of us... And thank God I had enough -- well, I can't take too much credit -- but I did have some receptivity. But Carlton Goodlett, my dear old friend, and a man named Dan Collins whom I still adore; we're still

JC: very friendly with him, or Daniel Collins -- first dental instructor at U.C. Berkeley. And a man named Ed Boyd, first Black ever employed by Pepsi Cola. Sounds like a group of "firsts," but that's the way it happened. Joe James -- who is in New York, incidentally -- he was the first Black man ever to crack the labor union here, the steelworkers. And his wife, Alberta. And a man named Cecil Poole, that you may have heard of, and his wife -- they were newcomers; they had come from Philadelphia.

We used to have weekly 'round tables.' By this time Audley was in the army, so it was godsend for me. Carlton used to pick me up and we'd go. His wife wasn't concerned. (She was a great society woman.) And we'd have these terrific talk fests. And really it was a great education for me.

I had sense enough to listen. Through them I got to understand that this infusion of "new blacks," as they were called, was the best thing that had ever happened to us as an ethnic group. Because what the heck did we have? We didn't have anybody on the Police Commission or any other city commission. My father was one of the big big shots -- and with all due respects to his memory, and I adore him and he was a great man and he made any position dignified -- he was a doorman! Which is not what you'd call the highest career aspiration. Walter Sandford, who was the other big shot in the city, was the mayor's chauffeur and page. And everybody else who was supposedly in a good position worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance -- in the kitchen, in the restaurant part. They weren't insurance agents, believe me. Or my cousin who worked for insurance underwriters. They did chore work, like in the mail room and so forth. There was nothing!

Many of the Blacks who came in had degrees. They were doctors or lawyers or professionally trained people. This began to give us not only the strength of numbers, but some clout. [Interruption during which refreshments are offered by Mr. Cole]

JW: After the interview for that. Thanks for offering, but we have about fifteen minutes left. Thank you.

JC: Thank you, dear.

AC: You don't like anything i.e. coffee or tea, I know.

JC: I'm sorry, dear. I've never been able to drink anything.

Anyway, they gave a push. They began... There was a wonderful man -- Aud, what was the name of the man who was a dentist in the NAACP who died, youngish man who did so much? Do you remember? Do you remember whom I'm speaking of? You know, he led all those marches and everything. He practically killed himself on behalf of the NAACP.

AC: Yeah, I've forgotten his name. He was a teacher at...

JC: U.C. Parnassus [University of California at San Francisco].

AC: I can't think of his name.

JC: It will come to me when Jesse's gone. Well, men like that. And, of course, the inevitable Carlton Goodlett and Dan Collins. Dan Collins and Carlton Goodlett got together and bought out and published the Sun-Reporter. It was in the hands of a White man who was doing a district paper; he was very much into it ethnically, but he was a Caucasian. He sold the paper to them. And we began to get a consciousness that we had some power. Then a gorgeous thing happened: We got people thinking they could run for city government. So then we got a supervisor. Was [Terry] Francois our first supervisor, Aud?

AC: I think so.

JC: Yes, I think he was. Audley had cracked the streetcars. Reverend Haynes, Sr., had run for Supervisor but had been defeated. But he made a good showing.

Before that, they had had what my father called "peanut politicians." People who would go and say, "Now look, I can give you the Negro vote." Of course, they couldn't. They'd get a few dollars handed out to them and then they'd go talk in the lodge about, [in dialect] "Now so-and-so is a good man. You better vote for him. He'll be good to us." That sort of penny ante stuff.

But then we began to move as a power. I was able -- not through any fight, but through the help of people who were placed politically -- I was able to crack the school system and get appointed. Of course, I had to be at the top of the list, but I still got appointed. We had the qualifying exams in those days.

Things began to break for us. Then we got a Black principal of a school because we got a superintendent out here from New Rochelle, named Clish, Herbert Clish, and he appointed a man from Texas who had come in and was working on his doctorate at U.C. Berkeley. A man named William Lenox Cobb, C-O-B-B, who has died since, unfortunately. Dr. Cobb became the first principal of an elementary school, the Emerson School over at Divisadero and California. My sister went there when she was a little-bitty girl. Now it's been renamed the William L. Cobb School. When he died, they renamed it for him because he was principal there for a number of years.

So, the best thing that ever was happened to us. Now we have doctors. We only had had the one, and lots of people didn't know about him. We have lots of funeral parlors now. We have Golden State Insurance on a big scale, and everything else. All made possible by not only numerical strength, but the brains and the know-how. And the guts: that's what we needed. And it's been a tremendous thing.

JC: Of course, I have friends who would heartily disagree and say that, [affected accent] "Our social structure has cracked." I don't even belong to the Native Daughters, because it seems to me that it's too elitist. That's for people who were born here. They only have to be Californians, not specifically San Franciscans. But most of them are either Oakland or Berkeley or Alameda or San Francisco. One of those little "in" groups again.

JW: What is the Phyllis Wheatley? Or was?

JC: Well, Phyllis Wheatley Club doesn't exist anymore, does it?

JW: I haven't been able to determine that yet.

JC: I don't know much about it. I just know whom it was named for.

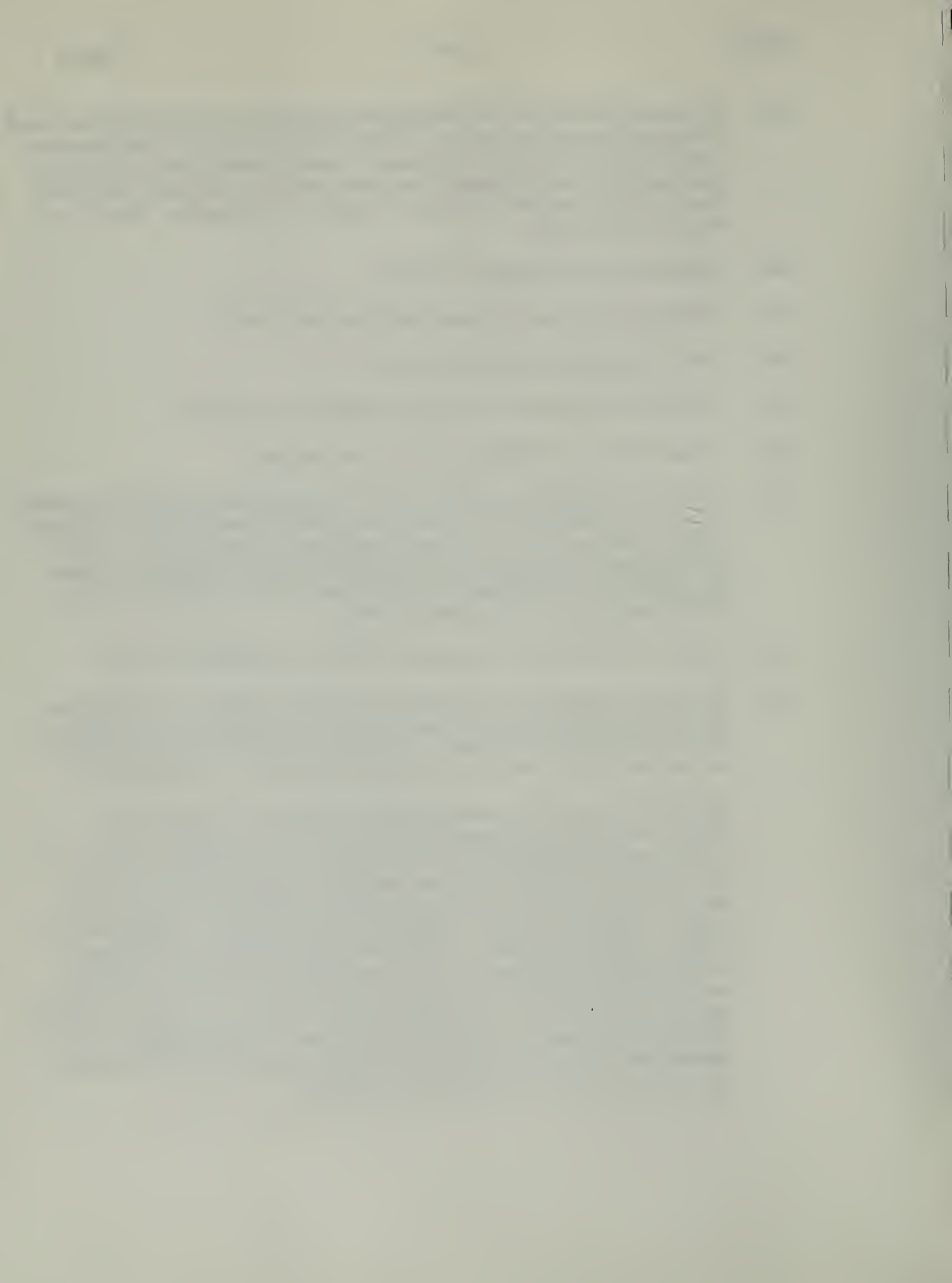
JW: I thought they were something like the Native Daughters.

JC: Maybe so. I don't know much about them. I've never been much of an organization joiner. They kind of don't interest me. When they get into all this structure and election of officers, I'm ready to cut out and leave. I don't care for it. That's what's getting me a little down as Toastmistress. I like the speech work. But all this bickering for who's going to be elected what tires me. I don't know about Phyllis Wheatley... What happened to what?

JW: Cosmos. Did it survive the immigration? Did they assimilate new people?

JC: Well, I ran it a couple of years after the so-called immigration. My father and the old guard, you know, they thought "it's all gone to the devil." And they got older. So I think the last Cosmos -- I have the pictures of it -- I think the last one was about '54... about twenty-four years ago now. I was in charge then.

The belief in this kind of philosophy I think has died out. It was the social function. It was the only place where Whites and Blacks mingled equally. It was a very high class, quality kind of thing. I will say, without reservation, it was a tremendous thing. But it would be anachronistic now. The time for it is gone. We have many, many sources of integration through common causes and interests. Then, for a Black to be on the Police Commission or somebody like Ray Taliaferro, head of the opera... not opera, Art Commission... or somebody to be on the Opera Commission, which a friend of mine is aspiring to -- she has a beautiful voice and operatic training, she should qualify -- or for anyone to be a Supervisor or high in the school system would have been a pipe dream. Unheard of. So now there's no need for the thing the Cosmos did. But in its time it was unequalled and great. I'm eternally grateful that I reaped some of the rewards of it -- the utmost of which was meeting Audley. (Laughs)



JW: His landlady never knew what a service she performed.

JC: What good she did.

JW: The last thing I want to ask about today would be, since you were so close and are so close with Michi... the whole question of the Internment during the War. How that went and what happened to her?

JC: You want to interview her?

JW: Well, I wanted to ask you what you know about that.

JC: Well, Michi doesn't talk much about it. You know, the Japanese are like many other Orientals -- I'm not stereotyping. Generalizing usually has its invalidities. But they don't like to talk much about their innermost feelings. I found this out. It's an Oriental tradition that only emotional slobs spill over what they're feeling most.

But I do know from my former dentist whom I admired and liked so much, Sese Murata, who is now dead, that when they went to the relocation camps -- and one other woman has told me this too -- not Michi, but her sister -- that when they went to these camps, they felt as if they had been stripped of their very being, their very personality. That they had become numbers and they were all herded together as an enemy mass. They also felt they were persecuted, because other alien groups had ^{not} been touched, namely the Italians and the Germans.

After the bitter resentment there came a resolve. (Since the Japanese family is the major unit, and in the relocation camps it was extremely hard to maintain this feeling. But they tried to the best of their ability.) The younger ones especially made a resolve and the Matsuoka family has told me this: that when they got back, if they ever did, to their communities and their homes and so forth -- and some of them never returned to their own places, they went elsewhere -- they would make a concerted effort to integrate their activities more with the dominant group, which, of course, was the White group, so that never again would they be thought of as one composite mass that could be just cut out like you would a tumor. And that they would strive to be better understood and better integrated into the general life of the community.

It's long enough now to view this: the Japanese in this location have certainly adhered to that. They have certainly done that. Their YWCA, although it's headed by a Japanese, Yori Wada, who is a most distinguished citizen -- he's been elected Distinguished Citizen of the Year and he's on the U.C. Board of Regents, and so on and so on -- Yori has made every effort that that "Y," which is located at 1530 Buchanan, in the heart of the housing west of Fillmore, has made every effort to make it an all-community "Y." So that the Blacks are participants equally, numerically, with anything else. I go to a Buddhist Japanese school,

JC: which would have been unheard of in the past; it was a closed society. You still have to qualify. But there are more Whites there now...

JW: [Break] Closing the door.

JC: We're talking about "open-door policy" though. The Japanese travel bureaus and so forth have made a concerted effort to encourage not only tourism, but to encourage the kinds of tours that give you a cultural and other kinds of artistic and maybe historical, traditional understanding of the Japanese way of life, so that there's more understanding. Located as they are, with the tremendous development of Nihonmachi (which you say you've seen) they are rubbing shoulders with Blacks all the time. They make an effort, which isn't always met with response, to communicate with the Black community. But there are only very few Black individuals yet who see a commonality of purpose in associating with the Japanese. They view them with suspicion. I speak advisedly because I know people who have said this.

But I think there's a great deal more of good will and good feeling towards the Japanese than there is towards the Chinese because -- and here my bias shows -- I don't like the Chinese people as a rule and I have to fight against that. Because I have very strong memories of the extreme prejudice that the Chinese people have shown towards Black people through the years, to please the White Man. Whereas the Japanese have been independent. Their hotels and places of business have always been open, in this city... I can only speak advisedly in San Francisco... to anyone who could pay the bill and act appropriately. And for that, aside from my personal association, I have a tremendous respect for the Japanese.

JW: How did the Black community and how did you personally react to this announcement that they were going to be removed?

JC: Well, at that time I had the great privilege of going to the Fellowship Church of All Peoples. Audley was a student -- no, this was before he was in school. He went all through college after he got out of the army. I knew Dr. Fisk, who was the head of Religious Philosophy at San Francisco State College, as it was called then. Dr. Fisk had these at-homes, these meetings at his home -- a lovely home out here not far from where we live. He and his wife were personal friends. And Dr. Fisk knew many of the Japanese scholars. He was a close friend of some of the others. He opened our eyes. We were young then, too. He opened our eyes to the injustice of it all. So I felt very sad.

Then of course when Michi and Na'lo... Her father was living then; her mother is still living and active. Michi and Nao were uprooted. Then I had another friend, Yumiko, Yumiko Tatsuzaki. Yumiko had a dress shop. And they had such little notice. She had to practically give away the clothes and close the shop and get out.

We cried when we saw them off. We gave them everything that we could think of

JC: that they could take with them, which wasn't too much. Mostly some perfume, a few little knick-knacks. They weren't allowed to take any personal thing much. It was just as if your good friends were going to prison. That's what we felt like. I know I felt terrible about Michi and Nao. They were like family. They weren't allowed to write to you, you know.

JW: I didn't know that. It's just very difficult for a non-Californian and someone my age to picture something this tragic.

JC: Well, it's difficult for anybody of any age who wasn't here to realize the severity of that thing. Some of them, as I say, never came back. Those who owned property -- of course, they couldn't buy property, the first generation. You know what Issei, Nisei, Sansei mean? [Yes]. The Nisei could buy property. They had to lease it under the most unfavorable circumstances. Some of them had expensive nursery lands, you know, down the Peninsula. And they lost money. Oh, regrettable. It's a very black page in the history of the West. Also frightening. Because if they could do that to one group, they can do it to another.

JW: Blacks moved into where Nihonmachi is now I think after the Japanese moved out?

JC: Yes. Because I was teaching at Raphael Weill as my first assignment, which is at O'Farrell and Webster. That school had been predominantly Japanese. So had Pacific Heights up on Jackson Street. Then it became, a good number, not all, but a good number of Blacks. Yes, they moved in. Took the properties.

JW: Did the Japanese attempt to move back into that area?

JC: Yes. They have moved back into it. The Blacks were only renting or leasing.

JW: Well, I think that we'll save your teaching career and other things like that for the next session. Okay?

JC: Fine. You're the boss.

JW: Thank you.

END TAPE 3:4:1

BEGIN TAPE 3:4:2 (FOURTH SESSION -- SEPTEMBER 27, 1978)

NOTE that this session was necessary due to an inadvertent erasure of one half hour of the original second interview session.

JC: Mary Louise McKannay was one of the most beautiful spirits I've ever encountered. She was the daughter of a prominent lawyer, Harry McKannay, a staunch Catholic. She lived with her mother on 20th Avenue in the Richmond District. Early in her life, I think before she was a year old, when the family was on a trip to a resort, she contracted a fever. This fever left her paralyzed and spastic in that she was subjected to spasms of the muscles and limbs that she could not control. For years they went from doctor to doctor, therapy to therapy, hoping eventually that the little girl would be able to walk and at least have some modicum of control over her limbs. As time went on, her mind developed beautifully. She was a brilliant person. She did grow, but in a warped position, so that she had not only to be confined to a wheelchair, but her limbs had to be tied in... because at any unpredictable moment, her arms would flail, her legs would project, and her head would shake. And she would do herself bodily harm if she were not strapped in. So naturally, she had to have around-the-clock care. Mary Louise lived in this way until almost her thirtieth year.

I became involved when, as a university student, one of my professors suggested that... he had heard tutoring was needed because Mary Louise was determined to become educated although she could not go to school. So I applied to be a tutor and was hired. I taught her for over three years. We considered English, American History, French. We became very staunch, personal friends.

Mrs. Mary McKannay, her mother, was one of the most devoted women I have ever seen. With a modest income, she was able to take inmates from Napa and Sonoma [State mental institutions] who were mentally retarded and give them a home, train them with exquisite patience and forbearance.

One of my happiest memories is, of course, time spent with Mary Louise extra-curricular-wise, when we would go to midnight [Christmas] mass at St. Monica's Church, or we would explore some of the works of literature and I would dramatize. Or we would do socio-dramas of what we thought would be the dialogue in a modern way of the characters. Once in a while I would bring a student or friend or someone to the lessons who I knew would be compatible and who would add to our enjoyment. Mary Louise liked music. In those days I used to play the piano. So we had many happy times at that. I didn't live far away. We lived on Eighth Avenue and Cabrillo Street. Mary Louise lived on Twentieth Avenue, as I have indicated, near Balboa. (They're not far apart.)

Eventually, I was very proud to see that the University of San Francisco, which was then an exclusively men's university, granted Mary Louise the first degree any woman ever received from that University. I proudly attended her graduation ceremonies. I was heartbroken when a number of years later she consented to be

JC: operated on, since a new technique had been developed for control of the muscles. She gambled and lost. She died as a result of the operation.

JW: You mentioned before a news article that was carried about her obituary.

JC: Yes, yes, yes. That was in the old Call-Bulletin: "Life Was Spent in a Room by Mary Louise McKannay."

JW: When did you decide that you were going to go to [the University of California at] Berkeley?

JC: Well, I guess I had always known that, because ever since I was about three years old and tutored by my grandfather, I wanted to be a teacher... always be a teacher. Of course, to be a teacher one could go to what was then called the State Normal, which was to eventually become the State University, which was only a three-year school -- and was looked down upon professionally -- or to go to Berkeley. I had a vague idea of where Berkeley was, because I remembered the first day... my father's taking me to the University, because I had never been over there by myself... into Berkeley. But I always wanted to be a teacher.

JW: How did you find that Girls' High had prepared you for Berkeley?

JC: No preparation at all. We didn't have counselors then. Nobody mentioned the University, and there was no idea that there was such a place so far as I could discern. If I had only known, I would have taken sciences. I didn't have a scientifically oriented mind. My experience with biology was the lowest grades I ever got, which were B's, at Girls' High School. My mother believed only in A's. So I decided to avoid all sciences. So when I arrived at the University, I found to my chagrin that if I was going to go to the school of Letters and Sciences, I had to have many, many units of science. So I ended up taking courses like botany and astronomy, for which I was ill-equipped, being an extremely young person at that time and not scientific. So I sweated blood and tears as well over the fact. I was delighted to see that my sister, when she came along, got extremely good counseling. She went to Lowell High.

JW: What about social preparation? Did you find that you fit in fairly smoothly? How long did it take you to really adjust to the life on campus?

JC: No. I never did adjust. I never did adjust to life on campus because I had had no social preparation. There was nobody in San Francisco in the Black community who had ever gone to the University that I knew. The only family that knew anything about the University were the Davidsons and they were much older. So I had no preparation. I was a misfit in that I was overawed by everything. Everybody was older anyway. And my mother insisted that we have dinner at six o'clock every night. That was a family ritual. It didn't matter what was going on in Berkeley, I was expected to be here at six. Unfortunately, being a docile, obedient

JC: type, I was there at six.

JW: But you did get involved in sorority life to some extent?

JC: Yes, to some extent. But I disassociated myself from that, and I never joined... never involved myself since. The only sorority life I have is with the Honor Society.

JW: Which sorority was it that you...?

JC: Delta Sigma Theta.

JW: What kinds of things did they do?

JC: Well, I think in all fairness to Delta Sigma Theta, I would be a very poor judge, because it all seems so silly and superficial and unimportant now. Because I wasn't socially ready for it. I didn't know how to discount what was trivial and what was important. I do remember that we furnished a room in the Cowell Memorial Infirmary in the name of Delta Sigma Theta. But fundamentally I guess I'm against all non-integrated groups, unless they have a very high social purpose. Perhaps I'm too serious, being a Capricorn. But I'd just as soon not talk about Delta Sigma Theta, in all fairness to them. I would prefer to forget about it.

JW: Were you involved in any other extracurricular activities?

JC: Yes. I did quite a bit of work at the YWCA and at International House... always interested in international groups. Within my limited time slot -- since I always had to be home -- I did what I could as a member or on the desk or [as a source of] information, or participated in any of the International Days that they had.

JW: What do you think is the origin or the seed of your interest in international affairs?

JC: I guess my interest in the faint, remote strain of French in the family. And the University's presentation of many different types of national groups in the University body. The emphasis on the dignity and worth of all groups began to eradicate my feeling that it was unfortunate to have been born in a minority that was so looked down upon, so discriminated against and so contemptuously misused in the United States.

JW: What did your grandfather contribute to this interest?

JC: My grandfather was seven-eighths Cherokee Indian. He had run away from home at the age of eleven or twelve in upper-state New York. (I regret I didn't ask more questions about that.) But I know he shipped as a cabin boy on an English boat or ship and spent many years, ending up as first mate on [a] British schooner. He had a marvelously retentive mind. He also was a bit of a charlatan in that he was a bounty jumper in the Indian Wars period. He...

JW: A bounty what?

JC: Jumper.

JW: What does that mean?

JC: Well, he would enroll under one name and get a bounty for having enrolled in the Army or registered in the Army. Then he would go to another place and enroll under another name and get another bounty. I don't think they ever caught up with him. He was one of those rare people called a York Rite Mason -- which doesn't coincide with the bounty jumping at all. He had a tremendous memory. In later years in San Francisco, he was always called upon for the funeral services for the Masons or the Odd Fellows. He knew them all by heart; he never used a book. He was a fascinating man. In his earlier years he swam the Golden Gate. I don't know all the specifics.

He used the name Henry Brown then, and that's how I always knew him. He made marvelous plum duff for one of the old bars in San Francisco called the Old Poodle Dog [originally Poulet D'Or] as I remember it. He would make this in a big tub, wash his feet well and scrunch around with his feet, making this marvelous pudding, which was served on New Year's free of charge. He was really a colorful, colorful character. I'm sorry. I don't know more specifically about him -- that is my mother's father. A tremendously handsome man, he ended up his years as the janitor in charge of the old Wells Fargo Building.

JW: But specifically he...

JC: I'm sorry... Fireman's Fund. Wells Fargo Building first, and then Fireman's Fund was his last position.

JW: His international life. I guess, influenced your international interest to some extent?

JC: Yes.

JW: Who were the teachers, or what were the events that you remember from those four years at Berkeley?

JC: Well, my favorite teacher was Dr. Lowenberg who was a philosophy instructor. And Herbert Eugene Bolton, who made the story of California history fascinating. And then a man named Felix Flugel, who was an economics professor. So great was his domination I changed my major to economics. Those were the ones I enjoyed the most.

JW: Were professors as accessible, as human beings, to students in those days?

JC: No. The professors were on an exalted Olympian level, and they were approached only through their readers... in their offices. They didn't know their students. It's not to be, I guess, considered their fault because most of the classes were

- JC: three, four hundred, five hundred students. Wheeler Hall was a nightmare in a way (Chuckle) because it was mass production. Only in the sections did you get to know anybody. Those were section leaders -- those were not the professors themselves. But I enjoyed the lectures. I was fascinated by them, and was so naive that I didn't know at first that I should be taking lecture notes until I saw others around me doing so. (Laugh)
- JW: You described in the earlier [interview] which was lost an incident in which you decided to cut your hair for the first time, and your mother's reaction to it.
- JC: I've forgotten that now, but anyhow... I was anxious to have short hair. I remember that. I thought it might improve my looks. And being of the old school -- I guess I would say "Negroes" rather than "Blacks" -- hair was supposed to be an important attribute [that] you took careful care of. If it grew to a length, which mine did, then that was something... that was a physical asset. It all seems rather silly now although there is a great emphasis in the modern culture on how one's hair looks. Look what has happened to men's coiffures in recent years. In fact, men go to beauty shops now too, which is fascinating to me. Anyway, I decided I wanted my hair cut so I went and had it cut. When I came home my mother looked in horror and said, "You have ruined yourself!" (Chuckle)
- JW: Did you keep it cut or did you let it grow back to satisfy her?
- JC: Well, we fussed and fumed with it and put vaseline on it, as I remember, and it grew, of course. Then it was up to me what to do with it. So I kept it cut. It got quite... you know, the styles eventually were shoulder-length. There's a picture up there with longer hair... that top left picture... But just about the way I have it now. Of course, in those days it didn't need the help of Miss Clairol (Chuckle) -- who does a very good job. Well, we are fortunate in our family, we don't get gray very fast. I guess you would call it fortunate. Because my mother when she died -- who she was way up in her eighties -- had very few gray hairs. She was the one who had the beautiful hair in the family.
- JW: To what extent did "color consciousness" operate in San Francisco?
- JC: It was very prominent as I look back now. Then it was a fact of life: We used to divide ourselves, I guess, into the fair-skinned people and, I guess, the darker people. I've even heard it said, "Be careful when you marry that you marry a fair-skinned person," because then the children will be more acceptable to the dominant group and it will be easier to get a job, etcetera, etcetera. A very sad, negative, racist, deteriorating psychosis (I guess you'd call it) that I hope has been completely eliminated now. Because I believe with Stokely [Carmichael] that "Black is beautiful."
- JW: When do you think that the change in these attitudes began to come?
- JC: Well, that's sort of a general question: whose attitudes, what changes, and so forth.

JC: I can only speak for myself and my immediate surroundings. In some cases with my friends, I know it hasn't changed yet. (Chuckle) So I really don't know. But I think that the change came with the blessed, great, magnificent contribution of what some people call the "influx" of Blacks from other parts of the country, who were like a transfusion. They took this community and with the infusion of their abilities, their different attitudes, in many cases their superior training, they were able to revivify the Black body here so that now we are a vibrant, viable, and what I think is exciting entity. I thank God I've lived to see the many, many changes I have... present company not accepted, Jesse.

JW: It must have been a shock to see thousands upon thousands of people, many of whom were very culturally different, suddenly encamped in San Francisco. And I'm wondering to what extent... Were you immediately aware of... I mean, what was your immediate reaction in the early Forties? Were you sort of frightened by what was happening or did you find it... Well, how did you initially react to these people?

JC: Well, I was and continue to be absolutely delighted. First of all, when I was much younger I would come home from a shopping tour or something and say, "Mama, I saw somebody Colored today," or, "I saw a Negro in such-and-such a place." That was an event. Because then we knew practically everybody in San Francisco. Of course, the Forties were a heyday for me. So if I'd walk down the street and get some whistles from Black lips, it was an added thrill. Sounds egotistic, but it's true. We don't pinch over here, but the whistles are good. Now if anybody whistles, I turn around, bow and say "thank you very much." But in those days they were ignored.

I've always had a warmth and a feeling that I get with no other group except the Japanese that, "Oh, these are my people and thank God they are here." Because it was pretty lonely being the only Black teacher to sit in an assembly or a teacher's meeting with one hundred and twenty-seven other people, all of whom were White. Or I seem still to go places where there are always the other group. I've forgotten a good deal of who I am sometimes. Now it's so very wonderful to be able to hold one's head high and shoulders back... (and being a Black, the girls always say, "and butt in"... which is one of the things they kid the Jewish people and Black people about -- we are over amply endowed in certain anatomical regions.) And hold my head up high when people say, "Well, what nationality are you?" I say proudly that I'm a Black. They say, "Oh, well, how do you account for this, that and the other." It makes me very, very happy now to say, "No, I don't speak French well... there's been some French in the family... I say it because I have the natural Black affinity for languages" or some such thing as that. (Chuckle) It has given me a great pride in my ethnic origin that I didn't have before World War II.

JW: Were your girlfriends and the men that you knew equally fascinated, or were they more or less alienated by the new group?

JC: Well, it's hard to say. Now I knew Lionel Wilson, the present mayor of Oakland, well. I knew... it seems to me everybody I knew was sort of fair-skinned. Maybe it was because it was an unconscious desire to have acceptability in the home. I don't know... I don't know. It's something we really don't talk much about now. But I notice that the social groups in which I travel have people of all colors. Especially in the more intimate groups -- the Cosmos group excepted -- that [interracial social intercourse between people of all phenotypes] was an exception. But in the more intimate groups that I used to travel in before World 11, people were of a fairer hue. Now they are all colors, and it's much more exciting and wonderful.

JW: Okay, I don't know if you answered the question or not.

JC: (Chuckle) I don't know how people's attitudes have changed. But I never hear of anybody "passing" anymore, and that used to be quite common. In fact, I have relatives who have been in the fire departments or who have played on teams or something where they were not. They were appearing to be what they were not.

JW: The question I really wanted to... I'll ask again is... Your friends in 1941, '42, were they as open to this influx of people as you were? Or did they find themselves... did they feel they had suddenly been deluged by an alien tidal wave?

JC: (Chuckle) Well, some were open. But most of them, I'll have to admit, were a bit critical that they [the newcomers] weren't anyone of whom to be proud. I think I told you this little incident of a dowager (who will remain unnamed), but a dowager of very high standing socially, whose husband had quite a bit of the material wealth and had distinguished himself in the armed services of the old type, the segregated type. She was on Grant Avenue -- Did I tell you this?

JW: Yes. [Refer to P. 33]

JC: Okay. Well, then that's a pretty good indication of what happened. And I think that social events of that time, maybe even into the Fifties, tended to be rather exclusive of anybody that was... an in-migrant, unless they met certain social qualifications. But you know that's characteristic of groups world-wide, I suppose. I'm not saying that as an excuse, but I can understand it. But it's a lot more fun living now than it was then.

JW: It seems that the educational attainment of at least a small part of the migrants was... on the most part... would be greater than the average Black in San Francisco... people were coming out of medical schools and professional schools...

JC: Yes. Definitely, definitely. Yes.

JW: Did they in some way exercise a kind of a snobbishness over the local people, maybe in some act... I hadn't thought of that. But was there a possibility that they got into Alpha or other college related sororities and excluded the natives?

JC: Yes, I know what you're getting at because my first experience with that -- if I

JC: can be permitted to reminisce a bit -- was when I met an African student at UC Berkeley, in my tender years. He seemed to like me quite well. One day he condescendingly said, "Well, you know you're a hybrid." And so on and so on. That ended our friendship. But I found for the first part [sic] shocking experience that a Black person was actually looking down on me. So I know what you're getting at.

I don't think so ...that the college-educated newcomers were stand-offish I had the great opportunity to be friendly with Dr. Daniel Collins, Dr. Carlton Goodlett, Joe James and Alberta James, and people like that... the Glovers, Seaton Manning... Urban League people. They were all very kind, friendly, patient. Mason Robinson and John Pittman were active in those days. And although they were far out politically, they were delightful socially -- far out for our conservative thinking. No, they weren't condescending. In my case I was eager to learn and hear about things that were going on in other centers. They did tell me I should go to a Black college for at least a year. I never did, but they told me I should. (Chuckle)

JW: What about these round-table discussions that you mentioned? Was this a semi-formal kind of a thing?

JC: Oh, yes, with Ed Blake and the rest. Oh, they were fascinating. They were something like, I guess, oh, a symposium. They told me fascinating things about what people were doing in other centers of the country. They were all people of achievement. Ed became the first Pepsi Cola executive. Goodlett is well-known locally. I don't have to go into details about him. Dan Collins is the West Coast director of the Urban Division of Harcourt Brace & Janovich. Although he was the first Black instructor in the school of dentistry at the University of California, Berkeley, and is a consummately skilled dentist, he is now the head of this great division of the publishing company -- which shows his versatility. Alberta James... Joe James was the first Black man to integrate the shipyard workers' union. Alberta James and Joe are artists; they give concerts in New York, where they live now. Outstanding people that it was my great fortune to sit in the midst of and learn.

JW: Were these like potluck dinners, or how did they actually happen?

JC: Well, we'd have the potluck dinners sometimes. Other times they came after dinner. My husband was away in the Army. We would sit around and talk about these things. Then at that time I became a member of the newly established Fellowship Church of All Peoples with Dr. Howard Thurman as one of the co-pastors. The original founder was Dr. Alfred Fisk who was head of the Sociology Department at San Francisco State College, as it was called in those days. It was through Dr. Fisk's 'home evenings' for students that I got to meet the Thurmons and others. Then I went to the Church. The Church fostered religious discussions which paralleled... So I got a great deal of education in those days outside of the University. And I'm eternally grateful for that.

JW: What about the possibly unequal number of poor, poorer, White Southerners coming

JW: in during the War? Did you have any consciousness or contact of them and with them?

JC: Yes. An interesting thing: My first teaching assignment was at Raphael Weill School, which is on Buchanan Street in the Fillmore District. I had students who were the children of poor Whites. When these parents came to school for an "open house" or anything, to see a Black person teaching was a shock. Some of the students were taught to resist. But I was a firm believer, and still am, in the philosophy to overcome evil with good. And when you treat a person beautifully who is treating you badly, or you continually find the dynamic within that individual that you can develop, particularly a very young individual, eventually he capitulates. Then they are your most ardent supporters.

So that I still look over some of the notes and a couple of the old gifts that I've treasured of people who said... In one letter, badly spelled, a father's written, "Excuse me for being a redneck, (N-E-K). I am sorry. I am glad you are teaching my son." He was in the third grade, the son. Things like that have helped me to grow and to understand the old American Indian proverb, "Do not criticize a man until you have walked in his moccasins." Perhaps I would have been just as rednecked, too, because I think some of the attitudes I had within my own ethnic group are far from laudable.

JW: Were you aware of poor Whites before the War?

JC: No.

JW: Were there any that you came in contact with in San Francisco?

JC: No. I never had seen any, and I don't think San Francisco has even yet what you can call "slums." I had heard my father mention, because he was a Kentuckian, that he had a family he loved called the Sannifers. Sometimes he stayed at their home and sometimes one of the boys would stay at his house. It didn't matter, because they were poor Whites, who stayed at their house. I got the implication [impression] that if they had been any kind of status White people, he would have never been able to stay at their house nor would they have stayed at his.

JW: Then the consequences of this must have been... you must have associated... all White people had money or were at least middle-class?

JC: Well, my mother was a San Franciscan who grew up in North Beach. She went to Catholic church. Her best friend was Nora Costa, an Italian. I grew up with the Italians as good friends too, as well as the Japanese. So Mother didn't have a race consciousness, and since my mother's appearance was such that she could have been practically anything... mistaken for anything, she didn't run into the problems that she would have had she been in the South. My mother had red hair and freckles as a child, and when she grew up she had long, flowing hair and was a very beautiful woman. So she didn't have the problems that maybe

JC: somebody else would have, because there are swarthy Italians and she was right in the midst of them. She went to the Catholic Church until she was married.

JW: Okay. I guess the last question I will ask, because this was also sort of erased... What kinds of books were the mainstay of your reading during the Thirties?

JC: Well, any time in my life books and I have been going steady. I adore books of all sorts, as is pretty obvious. [Large room where interview is being conducted is largely furnished with books and potted plants.] I only regret, or I hope, that when I die that I might edge into heaven. I just hope they have all sorts of books there and no Dewey Decimal system. But anyway... (Chuckle) As a child my grandfather introduced me to his love, which was the Waverly novels of Sir Walter Scott. I reveled in Kenilworth and The Talisman and Ivanhoe. And then Dickens... I guess all of the Dickens books I adore, although I guess my favorite was Oliver Twist. I'm not sure -- it might have been Great Expectations. Then as time went on the Dumas books -- Les Trois Mousquetaires is still one of my favorites, and then Vingt Ans Après also. Then I love, still love, historical novels. So I read The Cloister and the Hearth, things like that. Love stories of the One Hundred Years' War and the Crusades. The Cloister and the Hearth was one of my favorites. Then I got to be quite a devotee of George Eliot. I guess my favorite was Adam Bede. Then, of course, I began to read American literature. Typical of most American youth, even today, my reading of books written by Latinos or the great contributions of the Asiatic world, I'm still rather illiterate about.

JW: What about novels of more naturalistic or realistic bent? Theodore Dreiser, Richard Crane, Richard Wright?

JC: I guess... Yes, Richard Wright's Native Son was hard for me to wade through. Even when I was teaching a course in Black Literature at City College just four years ago... some of it still is [sic] a little difficult for me. I remember Giovanni's Room by James Baldwin.

I think I have the old Victorian hangups. (Chuckle) I don't mean to associate myself with age. I don't believe much in age concepts. But I think Mother's background there came down to me. I still don't like too much realism. It kind of makes me a bit uneasy, a bit... I don't know what. I guess I like the Beautiful and the True and the Lovely.

I've done a great deal of reading in... I said I've neglected the Oriental. I've done a great deal of reading Isherwood's works... Bhagavad Gita, The Mahaburata, and also a great deal of the works of Spiegelberg, the great man from Stanford, who was a scholar of Sanskrit. And Haridas Chaudhuri [founder of the Asian Academy]'s works. I adored Alan Watts, the great metaphysician who was so erudite and so well-versed in the literature of the East -- who just died not too

JC: long ago. Alan Watts was on Channel 9 for a number of years. And I do enjoy Krishnamurti too.

I seem to have a mystical bent, even though as a Capricorn I should be very practical and goat-like in 'ascent on the mountain of materialism.' But the mystics and poets appeal to me a great deal. But it's a spotty kind of a reading. Maybe when I get into the doctorate at USF, they'll throw a lot of other stuff at me. But I don't... Of course, Shakespeare is one of my favorites. I even like the Canterbury Tales in the original. And I do like a great deal of French existentialism. I like to read things by Albert Camus -- he seems to appeal to me. I don't know. I'm sort of a contradictory person. But I don't care much for the gory details. (Maybe I'm looking at literature as an escapism.) I don't care much for that sort of thing.

JW: What about poetry?

JC: Poetry -- yes, if it's Keats or Byron or Shelley, or Browning. Paul Lawrence Dunbar I admire. I like Thomas Augustin Daly. I don't care much for modern poetry. It doesn't seem to mean much to me. Maybe I don't have the depth to understand what it's all about. Ferlinghetti or one of those... I don't care much for it. But I do like beautiful poetry -- Spencer's "Fairie Queene." I like Coleridge and Coleridge-Taylor. I do adore things that have a sort of... atmosphere, like "The Eve of St. Agnes" by Keats. Ah, I love that. I even like Swinburne. And the great Emerson and Thoreau and Longfellow and all them, yes, yes. That great flowering of New England means a great deal to me. I like Carl Sandburg and so forth. But I don't quite understand some of the modern poetry, I'll admit. The limited time I have to read, I just don't spend much time on that.

JW: Okay. I think we'll stop. Thank you.

JC: Très bien.

..... END TAPE

BEGIN TAPE 4:4:1 (THIRD SESSION - JUNE 8, 1978)

JW: Let's begin by referring back to your father briefly again. Did he ever talk about any experiences that he had with overt racism?

JC: Yes. The first one I remember was when he was a civilian employee of the U.S. Army. That was why he went to the Philippines. Because after the Spanish-American War, for a number of years they encouraged people to go to the Philippines and be in civilian resettlement (or whatever it was called then). I don't quite remember what he called it. But, anyhow, he spent some time in the Philippines. He thought, since most of his friends were in the Army, he'd like to join the Army

JC: too. But when he found out the limitations that existed then -- that was the end of the nineteenth century, beginning of the twentieth... the limitations, he said, "Oh, forget it." So that was the first real encounter.

Of course, my father was born in Kentucky, and Kentucky until very recent times was a typical Southern state, practicing racism in every way you can think of. My other relatives, on my mother's side, from Louisville told us stories about not being able to buy things in the store: If they pointed things out and then went to the back entrance, they were delivered to them. They couldn't try anything on or anything of that sort. So, anyone from the South in those days -- I won't use the word "were used to," but had been born into and grown up with racism... in the land of the free and the home of the brave. But when he found out the limitations in the Army, he said "forget it." So that was his first encounter.

Then, when he came to San Francisco and settled here and eventually married my mother, he probably didn't come into that close contact with it until... I remember once when I was a very little girl: my mother and father were celebrating a tenth anniversary, I think it was, or eighth anniversary. They got all dressed up, and they went somewhere... I think it was one of the hotels... to have dinner. And they were told, very politely but firmly, "We're sorry but we can't serve you here." So instead of going somewhere else where they knew they would be accepted, my mother, who was a very sensitive, very haughty, dignified person, said, "Let's go home."

I remember that my grandmother took care of me, I was that small, and I remember still being up. You know, it wasn't time for me to go to bed when they got back. And I wanted to know how could they eat so fast and everything. They didn't tell me much, but they told me, "Well, we had a disappointment." So my mother said, "Tell the child what happened." That's engraved in my memory. My father said, "Let's forget it." But my grandmother told me eventually what had happened. That impressed itself indelibly in my mind as some things do, and I thought what a terrible, terrible thing.

Then many, many years later, when some of us were privileged to go see a rehearsal of "Othello" with Paul Robeson, the incident came back to me with clarity because Robeson had a similar rejection at Vanessi's -- an immigrant, who had a place on the Fisherman's Wharf... still does -- but refused Robeson accommodation. It's only a restaurant, of course, and Robeson later brought suit and won it. And that was World War II times, if you please.

JW: So it was customary for Blacks to be refused service in the luxury hotels?

JC: Right. That is why I think my first admiration of the Japanese occurred. Because, aside from the personal connections that I've indicated to you, there was never any restriction. I've checked this in my later years thinking perhaps I was biased because of my personal friends. But there's never been any discrimination practiced

JC: by the Japanese people. Of course, they didn't have the great hotels. They now have the Sheraton Palace, but they didn't in those days. But the Chinese, who had big places in Chinatown, were avid racists.

JW: Did he [your father] ever discuss his experience in the Philippines?

JC: Yes, to a certain extent. He said how friendly the people were. And he resented it when the Americans called the Filipinos "rice machines." He also said that it was a little pitiful to him that people struggled so for recognition by occupational caste. Because a Philippine person -- now these were men, of course -- would rather be what he called "escribo" (clerk), something of that sort, at less pay than if he had what we would call a blue-collar job at more pay, because it gave him more status in the eyes of his peers. Of course, that's not peculiar to the Filipinos.

JW: Did he feel any particular affinity with them being a darker-skinned people?

JC: No, I don't think so. He was very young in those days, in his late teens, early twenties when he was in the Philippines. I don't think he did. He never indicated that he did.

His close friends, from pictures I've seen and later years when they visited us... His big friend was Jimmy Cranston, who became the first Black warrant officer in the U.S. Army. He had a tremendous admiration for Colonel Young, who was the first Black colonel. He was an infantryman as I remember... no, cavalryman. (That's the man that rides the horse.) Magnificent figure. Of course, he's in all the Black histories. I think his name was Charles Young. But anyway, Colonel Young was my father's hero. And, of course, Teddy Roosevelt and San Juan Hill. He often mentioned that. He had a great admiration for Teddy Roosevelt.

My father made the newspapers when in nineteen-aught something or other, before I was around, then Vice-President Taft, William Howard Taft, was in a parade up Grant Avenue, when my father was working at Shreve's. And he said, "Hello, you big, fat Billy you." Taft lifted his hat and bowed and smiled and waved. That was no disrespect, but it was in the mood of Taft, who was a jolly, joking kind of person (who was then Vice President), so he didn't have the dignity of the office [of President] yet. It was in the old Call-Bulletin, I remember.

JW: He arrived in the Philippines, of course, after the War was over.

JC: Yes.

JW: But was he involved in any sort of mop-up operations, or did he say anything about the slaughter?

JC: He didn't say anything about that, but he talked about the deplorable sanitary conditions. He worked in a hospital with cholera victims. Fortunately, he never got cholera, but some of the men died who worked in the Civilian Corps. He said that it was pitiful, the living conditions of the Filipinos.

JC: Of course, he was young then, and I don't think he was too conscious of the social implications of all that. I think he was what they used to call "jingoistic." He was very proud that the United States was going to be such a world power, because in those days we were on the ascendancy of our world powership. (It's a little doubtful where we are now.) But in those days it was doubtless a matter of pride, especially to a young American, that we had mopped up that war in... What was it?... one battle or some such. And acquitted all this great White fatherhood.

JW: What about after he became a doorman and was constantly in touch with the public? Did he ever talk about any incidents of prejudice?

JC: No. Being a Southerner and having ingrained in him that Whites were superior... I don't believe he ever thought they were superior, but he acknowledged they were superior in control in this country and that if you wanted to get along and live well, you didn't fight that. He was not a militant in that sense. Then, he had such a charming personality, that people liked him so much and they were so kind to him, that I don't think he thought he was being patronized. He didn't have any incidents, no, because he was himself. He was a law unto himself.

The store he worked for gave him sort of special recognition because they knew many of the customers came there because of the service he rendered outside. He had a way of saying, "Oh, there's a beautiful so-and-so carat diamond today. It just looks like you, Mrs. Vanderbilt," or Mrs. Roos or whoever it was -- or Mrs. Tucker, Nion Tucker. And they'd say, "Well, all right, Joe. I'll go in and have a look at it, if you think so." He'd take them in and turn them over to the salesman. Of course, he realized he never could be a salesman there.

So I don't know -- he didn't discuss too much. But he was dedicated to the fact that both my sister and I should receive the utmost in Education he could provide for us, or make possible. So that must have been a silent way of saying, "You're going to have a better status than I." Because in those days to send girls to college seemed to be a waste of time... his friends thought.

JW: Did he make any general comments about the class of people that he was in touch with? Did he think that they were in any way morally or culturally superior to other people he knew?

JC: You mean in touch with through his work?

JW: Yes.

JC: He would just sometimes relate how elaborate their parties were or their weddings. I know we used to love for him to work at weddings because he always brought home little boxes of wedding cake and we could... he brought home extras we could open and eat. Or, he'd bring home other goodies. He often went down to Mrs. Pike's ranch, who was a great horsewoman down at Woodside.

JC: Quite often he was invited socially, not to work, but socially, on Christmas to the DeYoung and Tuckers' Christmas parties.

My sister's name is Phyllis. He never said -- we always said she was named for Phyllis Wheatley. But I have a sneaking suspicion she also was named for... in honor of Phyllis Tucker, whom he adored. I know every Christmas we used to go to their big Christmas parties and get dolls and gifts and so forth. I still keep the contact with Mrs. Tucker, who is a very old lady now, of course, and lives at the Burlingame Country Club.

JW: How did you... Well, we did discuss how you met your husband, but we didn't...

JC: At the Cosmos?

JW: Right.

JC: Yes.

JW: Escorting his landlady.

JC: Yes, he drove his landlady there.

JW: What was it that impressed you about him?

JC: About my husband? Oh, I guess, everything. Well, it's kind of a joke: The first I ever saw of my husband was the back of his head. He was sitting with his back to the door. (This was the International House on Washington Street, and it has a huge door.) As you go in, the audience sits in another room and you see the backs of their heads. He had his foot out in the aisle. I knew everybody there and everybody's friend and relative, and I thought, "Who is that?" So afterwards, since I was hostess that evening and mistress of ceremonies... he sort of stood there, you know, he didn't know anyone and his landlady was quite a middle-aged lady at that time -- she was off with her friends. So I went up to him and I said, "Are you a stranger here?" And that's what started it. So every once in a while, when things aren't going so well, he says, "That's what I get for speaking to strange women." (Laughs)

JW: What is his family background?

JC: He was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His father, Audley Cole, Sr., was born in Kingston, Jamaica. There's a racially mixed background in that my father-in-law's father (Audley's grandfather), was the Portmaster of Kingston, and was a Caucasian. But in those days, which would be in the late 1800's, they didn't have the feeling of segregation or racial superiority, from what I understand. Audley's grandmothers, both maternal and paternal, are of English and Welsh background.

JC: I never had the good fortune of meeting Audley's mother; she was dead when I met him. But his father's still hardy and incredibly active. Audley tells of trips with them. When they came from Pittsburgh to California, his father worked for one of the great steel fortune people and they [the employers] had a California home. That's what brought them out to Pasadena.

He lived in Pittsburgh, which although it's in the North, was a Southern kind of city, and still has its hang-ups, I understand... I've never seen Pittsburgh. But they lived in Homewood, which would be, I guess, comparable to East Oakland or some such. Or the Fillmore in the old days -- not the Fillmore now.

JW: Did he go beyond high school?

JC: Oh, yes. He's a graduate at San Francisco State University. He's a former supervisor of social welfare in Alameda County.

JW: What age was he when he came out here?

JC: When he first came out here, I didn't meet him. He was just a teenager. Then he came out... his first time out was in 1938. He came out with the Joe Louis camp. He was a sort of general cook and bottle-washer and so forth, because he was just a lad then. They liked it. And eventually his father -- what did the father do? -- the father had a liquor store, that's right, in Pasadena, and established a business, and was also the chauffeur-mechanic for the Singers -- their home was in Sewickley, which is a luxury suburb of Pittsburgh. Then the father eventually severed his connection with the Singers and established his own business and had it for a while. Then he went back to Pittsburgh because there's an extensive family of half-brothers and sisters.

Audley's paternal grandmother married again, Grandma Gertie. She was darling. She had the most delightful accent and she lived to a ripe old age. His other grandmother, his maternal grandmother, I never met because she died shortly after we met and she wasn't here. So I never saw her, although I have the benefit of some of her beautiful lace that she made.

JW: Did he, when he came out here, find a West Indian subculture within the Negro community?

JC: Well, you say West Indian. They're not real West Indians. They just call themselves "Black", and they don't look for where anybody comes. You know, you're just a brother or a sister. So I don't think so. I don't know about Mr. Cole, but I doubt it. They just associate with people, period. So I don't think so.

Every once in a while I will tease Audley and say, "Well, you come from the land of the coconuts," or whatever. Once in a while he'll say something about Harry Belafonte -- sounds as if he really did come from there. But that's all. Of

JC: course, Audley has never been there, and I can't even talk him into a Caribbean cruise. But I think it's a delightful heritage, and I'd like to explore it more. But I meet a stone wall. They [husband's family] don't seem to be a bit interested in it.

JW: How long after you met him did you decide to get married?

JC: A year and a half.

JW: Did you know you were in love from the beginning?

JC: (Laughter) No, it just sort of grew. In fact, Audley is five years younger. So I said, "You must come out to the house" -- he said he didn't know many people here. I said, "You must come out and meet my sister," who is five years younger. They're the same age. So eventually he came out to the house and met my sister. They said, "hello," but that was all. (Laughs) They liked each other, but nothing happened. My sister eventually married a friend of Audley's, Tommy Nelson from Pasadena. But that was only incidental.

JW: So at what point did you actually leave home?

JC: When I got married. I'd been at home all my life. When I got married we moved out.

JW: What age was this?

JC: Twenty-eight.

JW: Did your mother object?

JC: Yes. Strongly.

JW: To him or to the idea of you moving?

JC: Well, both. You see, I was engaged to someone else, of whom mother approved highly because he had his own business. It was a cleaning and renovating business, but he did well at it. He was very nice. We'd known him for years; he was a favorite of mother's. He was a little older than I, which in those days seemed more appropriate... a couple of years older. And he was well known to Mother. We'll just call him Oliver -- that was his name, his first name. He still is around. Once in a while he pesters us by calling. He's never married, so far as I know. But I don't know... I came from a very sheltered, a very strait-laced, very moralistic background.

I don't know about Dad. He always conceded points to Mother, and Mother ruled the roost. So I don't know. I think my dad could have been a very charming bon vivant. But he was the ideal family man. He was always there when you

JC: needed him, and so on. (Let's not get into a praise of my father.) But he was exactly the way I've represented it. Something like your father, Jesse. He was integrity itself. He wasn't one person outside, another person at home. He was always the same. So I don't know what Dad's secret things were. But our home atmosphere... You wouldn't believe it now. People would say that's fantasy, so I'm not going into it. But it was so true.

So Mother was very much opposed to my breaking my engagement. She also referred to Audley...

[Interruption]

Audley Cole: Good morning, Jesse. How are you this morning?

JW: Fine.

JC: I have to tell about...

AC: "That boy?"

JC: "That boy," yes. (Laughter) She was very much opposed to "that boy." Audley smoked in those days, so he coughed occasionally. She said, "He has a tubercular cough. He'll be dead within a few years."

JW: Did she throw it up in your face after it was an accomplished fact?

JC: No. After we'd been married a couple of years, she started adoring Audley. She loved him to death. I think she thought more of him than my sister or me, because he had a way with her. She'd never had a boy, and I guess he sort of filled that need too. And he was always very attentive to her. Really and truthfully, he understood her better than either my sister or I did. And, of course, in her later years when she was ill -- I think I've mentioned this -- her own flesh and blood couldn't have been that good. He did everything. He dedicated himself to her. He took off from work to take care of her affairs, and he never took a penny for anything he did. He just... I don't know. I always say he'll never have any bad luck really, because he was so devoted to her.

JW: What did your friends think of him?

JC: My father loved him too. Oh, my friends, they all thought, "My word!"... How did they put this?... "You certainly have gone into another world, as puritanical and bookish [as you've always been] and so forth. I don't know how it's going to work. But you can try it." (Laughs)

JW: Who makes the major decisions about purchases or what house to move in or when to move?

JC: Well, I don't think either of us makes the decision. We talk it over. We compare

JC: our points of view. If we disagree, we say, "Well, let's let it ride and think it over. I'll try to understand what you're saying, and you try to understand what I'm saying. Then we'll have a negotiations meeting." That's what we do. Although Audley's more precipitant in his actions. He says, "Oh, let's do it and get it over with." I'm more deliberative. So I guess astrologists would say our signs are not... what do they say?... "congruent." He's an Aquarian and I'm a Capricorn. I'm January 18 and he's January 23rd. (Sometimes I wonder though if astrology has much merit.) Anyway, we don't have any big disagreements because sometimes I'll say, "Well, I don't see that, but you go ahead and do it. You're a free agent." And he'll say the same thing to me. And even though it may not turn out well, we try to avoid that I-told-you-so business, because that can be a rancid kind of a thing.

I would say we do it as a partnership. But once the decision is made, then we both work hard to make it work. And he's very, very sweet in that if he thinks I really want something, even though it might be against his better judgment, he'll say, "Well, let's try it." And the same with me. I'll say, "Well, I don't think that's really the best thing to do. But if it's in your mind to do it, let's explore it." Sometimes both sides turn out a lot better than we thought. Sometimes they're a little worse... and then we're very close to trying to solve it. But, if I'm in need of anything or need assistance, he's right there.

For example, yesterday we had... Monday night my Japanese class met here. I hadn't planned anything elaborate, but when I went out in the kitchen to get things ready, he had them all ready. All I had to do was come in and play lady. He does things like that all the time.

Or, when we were first married and we didn't have much money, I saw a pair of earrings... I love earrings... down at the City of Paris. I said to the saleswoman, "I love these, but those are real gold. That's almost a month's rent." I forgot about it. So I went back home and I told him. I said, "Oh, I saw these beautiful earrings" -- just relating what happened during the day. He said, "Where?" I told him. Next thing I knew he'd bought the earrings. I know he had to buy them on time ^{on} ~~via installment payments~~. The saleswoman was so touched, she became a friend ^{of ours} -- a very fascinating lady from Vienna. So things like that he does all the time. Not just the first few years, but he still does.

JW: How has the women's liberation movement affected you or your relationship?

JC: Not much. I've very much for women getting equal rights, especially equal pay for equal work. I do belong to the Commission on the Status of Women. I have worked with Eve Reingold and others in the Black Women's Caucus. I'm for it. But I'm not an ardent women's "libber," because I really enjoy being feminine. And I think -- maybe I was born too soon; I'm an older generation -- I really don't care to open doors for myself and do all of those things. I love to be treated as a woman. And you know you do sacrifice some of that. But I do feel that it's a worthwhile movement, and I'm very much in accord. I'll do anything I can. Some

JC: of my former students are very ardent and whenever there's anything I can do, they know they can call on me.

But it hasn't affected our marriage at all, because, in the final analysis, even if it may not work out that way, I always admit that our name is Cole... it's not Foreman. Perhaps the Japanese influence in my life, which is strong, doesn't help either. Because in Japan, man is king.

JW: Did you ever consider having children?

JC: Yes. That's perhaps the only sad episode in a very fortunate life. That was a very sad incident. They weren't as advanced in those days as they are now with obstetrical knowledge and so forth and so on. So things happened that were unfortunate... I'd rather not discuss. Anyway, we lost the child before birth. And that's it. I spent a lot of time and effort and money. But they didn't have the fertility advances that they do now. So, nothing happened.

Then we considered adoption. But in those days you had to have a certain income, which we didn't have unless I worked too. You [Colored people generally] couldn't work and have that income. It was sort of a round robin. So... But we've been fortunate in that we have nieces and nephews. It's not the same, but they're close to us. Then of course I have my school, and I guess in some ways the students filled the need because many of my students have been far more than students. They still are. They keep contact, and we have friends your age and even younger who are like children. I know in our will they'll be remembered.

JW: If you had the first forty or so years of your life to do over again, what would you change?

JC: Well, I would leave home at an early age. This was no disrespect or disaffection for my parents, whom I adored, and still miss my mother terribly -- even though I was somewhat afraid of her, I'll have to admit. I would leave home earlier; and I'd travel. I'd try to get one of those Experiments in International Living or one of those scholarships abroad, to get a different point of view, and to get more maturation. I was in school chronologically too soon. So socially I think my education was...

END TAPE 4:4:1

BEGIN TAPE 4:4:2

JC: I would also go to a Southern school, a Black school or college, so that I would have had more recognition and more knowledge of my own heritage. Because living in a city like this, and having the influences of the French and the Japanese communities, I think there was a sort of a subtle lack of identity there. I accepted the Blackness as perhaps a disadvantage, because it was from an economic and an occupational-vocational point of view. That I would undo, and do all

JC: over.

So I'm very happy to see the youth now having a pride in their heritage. I'm very, very supportive of Reverend Jesse Jackson's crusade, although I think that's going to be something that takes a number of years to accomplish rather than overnight. I don't think he expects overnight results. But anything that builds pride in one's heritage and an identification... So I would do that over. I would also eliminate the sheltered kind of life that we lived.

JW: If you had been more rebellious, how do you think...?

JC: Not more rebellious, just rebellious. I wasn't rebellious at all, darnit.

JW: Would your mother have accepted this? Do you think she could have possibly adjusted to it?

JC: It would have been hard. Because she took our marriages, both of them, very hard. Although we both married very fine men. She adjusted to it later. See, Mother had a very sheltered, limited background too. She grew up in the Italian community. Her best friends were Italians, until her marriage. Well, I guess she would have to. It's only speculation.

But when my father died, who was... You know, she'd never really worked to any extent -- except before her marriage, she'd have a little job. He did everything. He did all the business. He was the extroverted one. He was the one who ran interference in everything. She adjusted to that, and did a magnificent job of handling her affairs... of course, with Audley's help. She did things I never thought she could do. So I guess she would have. She would have had to if I was gone.

JW: Do you still play the piano?

JC: No. Don't do that anymore. Don't have time. Have to study. I said the other day when I was dusting the keys, I must get back to this. My sister was a very good violinist. She was in the Junior Symphony. I asked her not long ago how was the violin, and she said, "I don't really remember where it is." Lifestyles change.

JW: You mentioned in the last interview about being a puppeteer or using marionettes.

JC: Yes.

JW: How did that happen?

JC: Well, they sort of interested me because they were a good way to teach language when I started to teach at St. Vincent's. And there were young girls... they were all girls at St. Vincent's... there were young girls in the group who liked to make

JC: things. So we started in puppetry. We were fortunate in getting one of the WPA puppeteers who liked to keep on after the program to help us. We had quite a group, and eventually the Coliseum Theater, which was near our home... it's on Ninth Avenue and Clement Street... they wanted Saturday matinee entertainment. So our group used to do that.

JC: We did it for about a year.

JW: Was this Punch and Judy kind of stuff?

JC: No, it was marionettes. Punch and Judy are puppets. No. We did dances to songs, and little skits that children's audiences would enjoy. We took Mother Goose characters and that sort of thing. We had seven in the group.

JW: St. Vincent's come after your Master's degree. Is that your first major employment?

JC: No. St. Vincent's was. I didn't get my Master's degree until 1958. St. Vincent's was my first job after I graduated and got my teaching credential and had tried unsuccessfully to get into schools here.

I don't know if I ever told you how that happened: They used to have a seven-hour written examination, National Teachers' Examination. Then after you passed the written part, if you did, you had an oral interview. So when it came to my oral interview, I was given zero by the interviewers. That put me on the list, so they could avoid being called discriminating. But I was so far down on the list that the list expired before I ever got called. So to keep my teaching credential alive, which you have to do, I started at St. Vincent's.

JW: Which is where?

JC: Well, it was at Fifth and Clementina Streets in this city and then they got a larger building, as the high school grew, till we had over three hundred girls, and it was at 1301 Geary Street.

JW: Was this private and Catholic?

JC: Catholic. That was on the corner of Geary and Gough. Then when the old cathedral on Van Ness Avenue was burned in a fire... I think that was in 1960's... St. Vincent's at 1301 Geary was levelled, and all that is changed. You weren't here, so you wouldn't know, but Geary was made into a boulevard and the new cathedral was built... the huge cathedral now. St. Vincent's was built in back of it in the same style of architecture. So then the Sisters of Charity were asked if they would change the name to Cathedral High School because it seemed more fitting since it was a part of the cathedral. Now it's Cathedral High School. We had a reunion not long ago, the old St. Vincent's group. So that was my stay there.

JC: Then World War Two came along and they needed teachers. You know it had been a prohibition in San Francisco that anybody married couldn't teach school too. So I took the examination then. And I said, "Well, I'll be number one this time. They can't fail me." I wasn't number one, darnit, but I was number three. So that's how I got assigned to Raphael Weill. This time I didn't flunk the interview. (Laughs)

JW: Was there any political mobilization to get you into the system?

JC: No. No.

JW: It was just a change in racial climate because of the War?

JC: A change in racial climate. You know, in World Two time, discrimination became illegal. It began in the armed services and then the war industries. That was the time of my husband's attempt to get on the streetcars too. Because any obstruction to the regular carrying on of business, "essential" business -- and education was essential, transportation was essential -- could be a felony.

So I did get assigned to an elementary school. But I stayed there the three years to get my probationary period in, and I loved it. But I was trained for secondary teaching and I like secondary better. So I decided that I wanted to be a secondary school teacher. At that time I remember well people saying, "Well, look, you broke the barrier. We now have one other teacher, Kathleen Robinson. We have one other Black teacher, who is also in the same school. So be happy." I said, "Uh-uh No" So that started the struggle all over again because I had to take another teachers' examination. So I qualified in both English and History. I preferred History. I was number two in History and number three in English.

But, it's a long story. I was at the top of the list -- you know, the lists came down. You can pass over a name three times, then you must appoint. So they needed teachers and I was holding up the high school list. Then we got a man here named Dr. Herbert Clish, who was from New Rochelle. And he thought it was the most ridiculous thing he'd ever heard of. So I got appointed to Balboa High School. And at that time... the Library has the clippings of the first Black high school teacher, etcetera, etcetera.

JW: Did you feel constrained in any way to be "above reproach?"

JC: Well, I'd been that way all my life through my mother's teaching. So it wasn't anything new. Although I did have some butterflies when I went to my first faculty meeting at Balboa. Balboa was then the largest high school in the city. We had over three thousand students, a faculty of a hundred and twenty-eight, and me. The faculty met in a little theater, and to walk in and take my seat... I can remember walking to the door and walking back and then walking to the door again. Then Mrs. Udden, who had been my sister's teacher at Roosevelt Junior

JC: High, joined me, and we went in together. She was on the faculty there then.

JW: Who were your most outstanding students? Anyone that's locally or regionally famous?

JC: Well, I don't think I had anybody that's "famous." I didn't have Carol Channing or anybody like that. They're a little older than my students now anyway. But Victor Macia was one of my first students at Balboa, whom I have a very warm relationship with. He's now lieutenant of police in charge of youth programs. We see each other all the time, although I told Vic the other day, "Don't be saying I was your teacher." Because he's getting old and gray. They were at St. Vincent's, of course, in those days. Let's see, anyone else?... Well, one of my students is a bank president... bank manager, rather, of the Bayview Federal Savings in Lakeside Village, which is a part of San Francisco. It's down the way a bit. Like that, you know.

JW: Did you feel at any point a change in the type of student or the quality of student or the disposition of students over that long period?

JC: No. I look back... I have some of the old papers I kept just for sentimental reasons... I demanded a great deal of these students and received it. I have book after book of scrapbooks they made of the classes. Because it wasn't too long before I became a demonstration teacher in English, methods, and was on curriculum committees.

Once you get in, they lean over backwards to make... I realize now... I guess it was tokenism. But I had a delightful teaching experience. I loved the whole time of it. It's one of the reasons we bought this house, so we could have student meetings here. No, I demanded a great deal and I expected a great deal.

Of course, when I was a teacher at Balboa, a Black student was a rarity. And those that I had were outstandingly good. The type of the Graves family. Some of them I know yet. One of them is a city manager in Ohio, and so on.

Last summer, 1977, I deliberately placed myself on the firing line, because I was supervising the program and initiating law classes for junior high school students -- which incidentally the district is adopting now. I'll be working this fall at Pelton, the big middle school out in the Bayview district. So I'm very happy about that. But last summer school... but I had the 'losers' in this class. They were younger than I usually teach -- thirteen, fourteen, fifteen was my oldest student. Of course, I was teaching law. I had a young lawyer, a little younger than you are, who had just graduated from Stanford, a Black man. He came and assisted me. He wasn't a good "black" man though; he had blue eyes and golden curls, so the kids never identified the fact that he was a Black man. But he was.

We ran that course, and, honestly, it was just a ball. We had so much fun. Those

JC: kids were great. In fact, they were very disappointed -- they came from different junior high schools -- they were very disappointed that they weren't going to find a course like that when they returned in the fall. Two of them went on to senior high. They were able to finish their credits.

So I really feel... I guess this sounds a little bit egotistic... but I really feel that if you're a good teacher, you can control a good deal of the climate of your classroom. Not by authoritarian methods. That's out. The old methods that I knew so well and accepted because I loved my teachers. Of course, they didn't seem so hard, alongside of Mother's discipline anyway. I was well oriented by her. But I really feel that if you understand group dynamics... I've spent a good number of years learning them. The Slavson method is good, and I like Carl Rogers' approach of non-directive direction. But I really feel that if you can get the key people in your class together, and do a lot of personal work at the beginning of the course ... sitting down and talking over what this experience is going to be, what you expect to get out of it. Why wasting time is a sin, because I really believe it is. They say "a mind is a terrible thing to waste;" I think time is a terrible thing to waste also.

The class goes, it really goes. But then I'm a neurotic-compulsive. I like activity, and youth are usually activity oriented. If you keep things jumping, they don't have much time to get into devilment. That's much easier than disciplining.

JW: Did you ever have any disruptive students?

JC: Oh, I've had a couple or more who didn't want to do the work. I learned early in my career that you can't save everybody. Everybody doesn't want to go to heaven. I've sat down and talked with them and said, "Well, now this is your story. How can we get along without killing each other? Because I'm strong-willed; and I have excellent health -- I'm never absent, which is true -- and I do have the authority you hate so on my side. So I can really annihilate you. How can we live in peace?" And usually it works out pretty well.

JW: Did you ever introduce Afro-American literature to the students?

JC: No, I didn't know it myself. I later on taught a course at City College in that because the teacher got sick and one of my friends asked me if I'd fill in. So I really... I had begun to read it by then. I have quite a nice library now. And I have a friend, Julian Richardson, who owns the Marcus Books in the five hundred block of McAllister. He loaned and sold me some. But I didn't know enough then.

I knew Paul Laurence Dunbar and James Baldwin, maybe, but James Baldwin was not on the accepted reading list, as you can well imagine. I knew enough to avoid things like Little Black Sambo. But, unfortunately... I knew some Langston Hughes. I'd had the privilege of meeting Langston Hughes at the home of Knowles Sullivan of the Phelan family, well-renowned family here of Senator Phelan's family. But I didn't have the knowledge myself. Also I stuck to the curriculum

JC: which we were supposed to do. I didn't get innovative till later.

JW: With the Black students who came in, perhaps with what is now fashionably called "Black English," did you take a stand on that issue? Did you allow them to use that in class?

JC: Well, I've never had a real confrontation on that because when I taught straight English it was Advanced Composition, and you can't do much Black English in that. Also, those are the college prep people. In fact I've asked for classes where students were poorly prepared, because I think that takes much better teaching than teaching kids who are motivated and well advanced -- although I always got stuck with the advanced classes. Sort of crooked thinking. Thinking, well, you're a good teacher, you get this class and you should be happy about it.

Then when I did demonstration classes, I was supposed to do that for two semesters and ended up doing them for fifteen. We became the demonstration group for the district. I always had students who were well motivated because they were picked by the counselors.

But, if I were confronted with that now, I think I would acknowledge... Because when I went to Hunter's Point, I assiduously applied myself to learning Black English, and I still need to learn more. But I can make my way around in it, and I know what's going on, what's being said. Also body language. I had the privilege of doing some work with Kenneth Johnson from U.C. Berkeley. So "body language" is another language.

But I think in a classroom I would say to the students that, "There are all sorts of vernaculars. Because we have a multi-lingual student population. There are Tagalog-speaking, Spanish-speaking, Italian, whatever, whatever -- and in this classroom we are studying English. Therefore that's the requirement of every student." And if we're going into vocational and occupational careers, as most everyone is who's at that age level, the only acceptable English is going to be the standard English. I certainly wouldn't presume to teach anybody Black English, because they're more advanced than I am and I don't think that it's a way of life in this classroom. They'd have to accept that standard.

JW: What do you feel about... I'm just going to ask a couple of questions relating generally to the whole process of education -- the Briggs initiative to force recognized or public homosexuals out of the teaching profession?

JC: I think he belongs in the Dark Ages. He'd make a very good executor of the Inquisition. I think he's on a bandwagon to get some notoriety so he can get some votes. I don't think it's even worth dignifying.

JW: What about the issue of... Do you have forced retirement here... at a certain age you must retire from the system?

JC: Yes. At age sixty-five. It's now going to go up to seventy and if you petition I think... if your health standards are strong enough and so forth... I think they make special consultant assignments. I don't know, they're sort of ambivalent about that. But sixty-five is the pension requirement yet.

JW: Do you think that teachers who want to teach should be allowed to continue as long as they...?

JC: If they are physically, mentally, psychologically up to standard -- and I think there should be some way of devising how that's tested effectively -- I think that their experience and their wisdom certainly shouldn't be thrown out just at the time when maybe a younger teacher could use it. Maybe they can't do the active kind of thing. Then resource and consultancies should be done. I think it's deplorable that we throw away some of the accumulated wisdom. In looking over some of the things that are being proposed now in the "redesign," I notice things that are very familiar to me that were in use in the Forties. So I don't think that the older teachers would be anachronistic, the good ones.

JW: Do you know Elizabeth Gordon, Walter Gordon's wife?

JC: Yes, yes. That's the Fisher family.

JW: She told me that she had done some part-time teaching back in the Twenties or so for just a while? Did she ever talk to you about that?

JC: In San Francisco?

JW: Yes.

JC: No, I never heard of that. But, of course, looking at "Sister" Gordon, Elizabeth Gordon, that could have been possible that they didn't know who she was racially.

JW: Oh, I see. I'd like to know just a little bit about your impressions of some of the celebrities that you have encountered. Like Josephine Baker, what was she like?

JC: Charming. Charming, delightful. Beautiful French. Very down to earth. If you'd like to see some pictures, some time taken right here in this room, of her with the students, I'll be glad to show them to you. I thought she did a beautiful thing of telling... We had her in our series of interesting people... That was another reason why we have the house. And she talked about her eleven children that she had adopted of all races, backgrounds, and so forth, and why. Delightful, delightful. She invited me to her chateau, which I never got to see, of course, because she's now deceased. She had a hard time holding on to it too. She had financial problems eventually. But she was an exciting experience.

JW: What about Sidney Poitier?

JC: Oh, yes. Well, Sidney Poitier and Tony Curtis were naturally idols of the students.

JC: I never got to know them personally, as I did Josephine Baker. But I admired Sidney Poitier. He has an innate dignity. He's a beautiful Black man. He's the very finest in articulation and enunciation. He has a dignity that has no age to it, although he's a young person. He's a commanding person. I don't think he would have any discipline problems if he were a teacher. (Laughs)

JW: You belonged at some point to the Fellowship Church of All People?

JC: Yes.

JW: Is that the Thurman church?

JC: The Thurman church, yes. Well, it really should be the Fisk church because Dr. Fisk -- who is now deceased, and who was my husband's teacher and was a personal friend -- he was head of the... Dear, what was Dr. Fisk's department at State? Was it Sociology? Or was it Comparative Religions, or what was it?

Audley Cole: It wasn't a psychology course?

JC: No, no.

AC: I don't know what his department was.

JC: Well, he wrote The Meaning of Life. I think it was Sociology. I'm not sure. But, anyway, Dr. Fisk was a personal friend. Dr. Fisk had the idea of the church before Dr. Thurman ever was here. Dr. Thurman did not establish that church. And so the idea of a co-pastorship, a Black minister and a White minister, Caucasian, evolved. So we wrote to Howard Thurman, because he was an outstanding Black minister, to suggest someone he thought might be appropriate. We were amazed and flabbergasted when he wrote back and said he would like the job. That's how he happened to be here. That church was established before he ever got here.

AC: Don't be late.

JC: Okay, sweetheart. I'll see you later then.

JW: Was the church purposely set up like the Cosmos, to be a place where races mixed in the religious sphere?

JC: Yes.

JW: That was the primary motivation behind it?

JC: Yes. That was Dr. Fisk's dedication -- that all races were equal. He wrote a very impassioned denunciation of the Japanese evacuation. He was a champion of people.

JW: How large was that church, in the Forties, let's say?

JC: Oh, I don't know. We started meeting at a house over on Post Street. I guess it was around a hundred, a hundred and twenty-five people. I'm not sure.

JW: What percentage of them were non-White?

JC: Oh, I don't know. I don't remember. It was about nip and tuck. I don't remember. It was both. The choirmaster was Mrs. Williams. And the quintet, which became famous, the Fellowship Quintet, was part Black, part White. In fact, one of them is still around -- Emory Mellon. He's the personnel supervisor in the schools. He used to sing bass.

JW: When did you leave the A.M.E. Church and move over into the Fellowship?

JC: Well, I never was in the A.M.E. Church. I just went. Mother belonged; I didn't. I never really "belonged" to any church. Fellowship Church I attended. I don't believe in denominations. I will go until something makes me go elsewhere. I will go a long time, that's true. I went to Vedanta Center for seven years. I've made a great... well, it will be a life-long study of Oriental religions. I go to the Institute for Religious Science. I've attended Baptist church, Methodist church, Zion church. I really don't "belong" to any church.

JW: Do you think that ministers and churches, looking at the larger picture, contribute something useful to the community?

JC: I certainly do. I greatly admire the church. I know it's fashionable to sort of deprecate the Black church and say it's spent many a dollar unwisely, and ministers have fine suits and ride around in good cars, while their parishioners are raking and scraping and so forth.

But I look at it as a very constructive force overall -- because I can't think of any kind of career in which there haven't been some scalawags as well. My grandfather used to tell me about a minister who used to gamble on the weekend and then put his winnings in the collection plate on Sunday. I don't know what happened when he lost. (Laughs) But I think that the Black church has been a great social force, an inspiration, a sort of cohesive element in a struggling, often disoriented, downtrodden group. I greatly honor and respect it.

Just currently, look what the Ministerial Alliance is doing here in this city. I admire Reverend Amos Brown. I'm sorry he had to pull kids out of school, though. But I do believe that a statement of dignity, that we are not going to allow Blacks to be eliminated from their positions or downgraded, makes people wake up to the fact that there is something going on among us.

Also the Black psychologists -- which is not what you asked me -- but the Black psychologists were effective enough to get the I.Q. tests eliminated. Of course, we haven't any substitution yet. We're going to have to have some kind of a measuring instrument to pick out the youngsters who have the greater potential.

JC: But it was true that a number of young Blacks were put in classes far beneath their ability because of those confounded tests that we used to have.

Yes, I admire the church and I think, like anything else that man has his hands in, it has its bad part as well as its good. But I certainly feel we would be farther back if it hadn't been for the church and church schools and church influence and the church's encouragement. I think Marian Anderson was first encouraged by the church, and Jules Hayward is another example... Sir Jules Hayward rather, who has been knighted by the Queen, and so forth.

JW: Did you join the NAACP?

JC: Yes. I used to belong to Junior NAACP and then we belonged to NAACP. Although I will admit we're more active perhaps in the Urban League and other organizations. Those things go in phases, and people we knew have either died or gone on. We were very friendly with Joseph James. And they were very important. The man I couldn't think of before, that I told you was such a hero and he sacrificed his own career...

..... END TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Second Half-Hour of 1.5 Hour Interview with JOSEPHINE COLE;
Conducted by JESSE WARR: May 17, 1978

[...U... & ...?... symbolize unintelligible fragments.]

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JC: ...they're not too sure [it's happening?] now. So anyway, that could have been; that could well have been. To me my mother was so wrought up in "prestige." I remember the day I did the Women's Day sermon at Bethel Church,--and she's the person who joined the church. She's Baptist like the majority...U. I did it out of a sense of I'd better [laughter]. Although I appreciate it, because that's what started me speaking, and...U...--which I enjoy. I go through all sorts of agonies before, but I enjoy it...U.

JW: Did you have moments when you regretted that you'd been born Black?

JC: Yes, because I remember when I began studying Comparative Religions,--if I ever come back to this life, I'm going to be real White and rich [laughter]. ...Then I saw power as being sort of an alarm clock which was going in big circles and [if] the Blacks were in power again, ^[and] Amazons were being duplicated, I'd be out of luck. So I sort of changed... [laughter]. But, you see, if you were White, you didn't have to question whether you'd be welcome in eating places, or whether or not you'd be acceptable in...?...society, and you'd have money, and unlimited opportunities for jobs. So, yes, sure.

JW: Weren't there poor Whites around?

JC: Well, I never saw them much. Poor Whites in San Francisco aren't very numerous, even today. ...World War Two. There wasn't anything such as "poor whites" that I ever heard of. No, I never heard of "poor whites" until I read some novel about the Appalachian Mountains. And then the Okies started to come, you know, to California, or they did come. They were the only poor Whites I'd ever know. And I heard that there were some poor people in Texas, who didn't have oil wells and who grew cotton. But we

never came into contact with that kind of White person. In the neighborhoods where we lived everybody was middle-class, you know. And my father always made a good living. So we never had to want for anything. And we didn't have to work if we didn't want to, although my sister and I both worked because we wanted to make our own money. But it was a genteel kind of work: tutoring. We had a very good life. I... ..tutor for a young lady who was a spastic victim, Mary Louise McCanny; she became quite famous. She hadat home. I taught her French; and she finally got a diploma by a special grant from the University of San Francisco...?...at all. I loved her dearly. ...?...Mary Louise McCanny. She was Irish and Catholic, and...?... . She got...?...fever, when she was about six months old. And she grew, but all distorted...?... . You have to tie them to their wheelchair. ...She'd get these spasmodic...?... . But she had such a keen mind. And it was difficult at times. She would be talking and all of a sudden: verbal imitation of Mary's communication problem...and she couldn't get it out. And I loved her dearly. We had a very close relationship. I used to go to Mrs. Mc...?... 's house with her; and I was like one of the family; she was like...we didn't live far apart. I lived on Eighth Avenue; she lived on ...?... . And we had the same cross street, of course. My early years...?...I have the clipping when she died. It said, "The world was one room to Mary Louise McCanny." She might have been living yet; but she risked it all on an operation...?...up at U C Hospital Medical School, which they thought would cure her of this. And she died in the middle of the operation. She was only twenty. ...U... She never would have had any normal kind of life, but...her mother was devoted to her, extremely. She's long gone too. ...U...might appreciate...U...

[Perks up] Well, I've had a very interesting life, when I look at it. It's always been characterized as very varied because I'm into all sorts of groups and situations. ...It [tickled?] me the other night when ...?...Board of Ed. The President is Chinese, Mr. Ben Tom. When he saw me, he came over, and he hugged me, and kissed me, and said, "This is my old girlfriend," you know. And so one of the young gals, who was sitting at the table in the back, she said, "Oh, you know so many different people and different races." She said, "it kind of inspires me because I'm into inter-cultural and ethnic relations. And I know just because you're Black, doesn't mean you have to just be friends with Blacks." I thought that was cute: she must have been all of thirteen, a junior-higher or something...?... . They're doing a magnificent job out there. That young principal certainly has got that school in line.. It used to be an eyesore and a heartache. It's now becoming one of our best academic middle schools. He's infused pride... . But don't get me started on schools. You know that's my great love.

JW: Not now. [Laughter] Do you feel that in your early life that... U...people who were dark-skinned...U...?

JC: Yes, I guess so, because in those days there was an elitism (?) of the people who were fair-skinned, I guess. My mother, who was much fairer than I; with long, black, beautiful hair;...I guess I have to say, in all fairness, that she did favor people **who** were something like she was. My closest friend, Bob Fisher, who is the principal now of Visitation Valley School--he's somewhat younger, but we spent many, many, many, many days together--we went to Treasure Island together and all,--He was an Eagle Scout (?). He's younger than my sister...But (sp?), his mother, was like a big sister to me. So Bob and I became fast friends, and we have been all through the years. Bobby...Oh, and Bobby's

in his fifties now; and...?...he lives not too far from here. His mother died a year and a half ago. We both were almost inconsolable for a while. But he's come out of it all right. He's a terrifically good scholar and principal. He never married, which bugged his mother: she wanted grandchildren. ...U...last petition ...U...as my grandfather used to say. But, anyway, the Fishers all looked like Caucasians, and the Haywoods(?), our close friends, and the Butlers. And I guess so. Because Eva (?) Williamson and Gladison (sp?) were very valuable: ...U...would go to these redneck meetings and then come back and report what was going on so we'd know who was going to move against whom, and who was keeping whom out of the neighborhoods. In those days...?...in the Richmond district, and the Williamsons lived almost in...?...district. Eva and my mother each...?...And then the rest of us moved! So I guess it would have been different. Because in those days when you described somebody, they'd always say, "Well, what color is he?" Of course, he was Black, which he was. But you'd say "fair" or "medium" or "dark." And there was sort of an expression among the older people: "He's a tarpolian (sp?) blond,"--which meant he was real dark, unmistakably Black. I guess so, because even up to the time Audley took the motorman's examination, if they'd known he was Black, he'd never gotten his nose in the door. They found it out later. But then it was a little too late, because he'd passed the exam and he was fighting it out. It seems so strange now because his life was on ...U.... Herb Caen came to our rescue. A lot of the Communists moved in on it too. And we had Audrey (sp?) Grossman who was a Negro lawyer. In those days Belli was a real young lawyer. They always...?...on the fact that this was ridiculous. It was wartime, We were discriminating at home with the same tactics as Hitler is using. And so on and so on. It was a

very lurid situation. ...So it was an advantage, in a way, because the Whites seemed to accept Blacks who look a little more like they like. Because whatever good thing you do, it's because you have a few drops of their sacred blood in you,--which is nauseating. Some of the greatest of our people didn't have any of their sacred blood.

JW: Did the people you associated with feel superior because of their color? Hold it against somebody or use epithets that would embarrass people?

JC: Well, now, Carlton and I are still good friends. (I talked to him earlier.) And he's about your color. I'm not going into(?) color anymore. Because I rebelled against that I ...U...too. My sister's present husband, Harold Jackson, who was one of the Ink Spots...U...; and he was fairly brown-skinned. The only thing that ever was noteworthy,--and I think this is still going on, Jesse,--is that the darker men would always date fairer girls, and marry them. That seemed to be the pattern. They would come right out and say, "Don't bring me no kinky-headed gal." You know, if you were going to say, "Well, I have a friend. Would you take her to the party or whatnot?" "What's she look like?" "Oh, she's very nice-looking." "Well, you know what I mean." And, you know, you just accepted that! It's like saying is somebody lame or blind. And that was one of our hang-ups. [And it still is?] It's regrettable. Shameful. But brainwashed, I guess, by the White man.

JW: ...U...

JC: I don't think that's true anymore. You would know more about fellows than I. Do they still have preference for what they used to call "high yellows"?

JW: Well, I think the color may have changed, but the hair (?) and the features...You look at the "Black" magazines.

JC: Yes. And my mother...You know, you should have seen my mother's hair. Beautiful hair. She would say, "Brush your hair a hundred times. We've given you good hair. You take good care of it." When you'd come from a party or anything,--no matter how tired you were,--Mother would, was always this light sleeper. She'd get up, brush your hair,...?... Boy, when we both had our hair cut, she had a fit, just a fit.

JW: When was this?

JC: Oh, long, long ago when short hair was first coming into style. I told her I wanted my hair cut. "No, you can't have it cut." So I went and had it cut. Then I was scared to go home. Circled the block several times. When I finally did, that was one of the times she used the corporal punishment. I was, let's see, how old was I then? Say fifteen. She didn't make such a fuss with Phyllis. That was ...?...Phyllis had it easier, because she's the second child, and we were together a lot (?). We were always together on big issues (?). In fact, she...?...my mother a couple of times. My father said, "Oh, [it looks] pretty good." [Mother:] "Oh, looks terrible!" But it was done. So they ...?...got along again ...U...Just automatic, you know: "Take care of yourself. Take care of yourself." Those were good precepts, if we...U... But my mother's hair was beautiful.

JW: When you went to Berkeley, did you join the sorority?

JC: Yes, to my regret. Delta Sigma Theta. All light[-skinned] girls. And when I found that out, I quit. I really had sense enough to quit. They felt I can't quit, but I did.

JW: Who told you...?

JC: ...?..., ...?..., Vivian Osborne Marsh.

JW: We're doing [an interview with her later(?).]

JC: Oh, really? She was the queen bee. ...I should have joined the

AKA.

JW: Pardon?

JC: I should have joined the AKA, the Alpha Kappa Alpha. Alpha Phi Alpha were the men.

JW: Right.

JC: Alpha Kappa Alpha were the other gals who were quite intellectual, as I found out later. But I didn't know the difference. Boy, it was all I could do was to get permission to go to the sorority meetings. I thought it was to stay over there late, but I found out differently. My mother was very incensed about things(?), especially the initiations.

JW: What did that involve?

JC: Oh, some silly thing. You had to dance blind-folded on Telegraph Avenue.

JW: ...U...

JC: Yes. ...?...had some kind of terrible tasting stuff that was supposed to make you unconscious and scare you to death. But it didn't make you unconscious. It just tasted like, as I remember, tabasco and vinegar together. Silly stuff! Just aping the Whites. I think the whole sorority thing is ridiculous! So when my sister went, she didn't join...?...

JW: But you have maintained some kind of affiliation with...U...?

JC: The Alpha Kappa Alphas. The Deltas did not ...?...school. I belong to Delta Kappa Gamma. It's an honor society. It has nothing to do with Delta Sigma Theta. ...U...outstanding achievement in education. And it took me a long time to get in that. It's a heck of a Delta group?. But they're all right, the way sororities go. I just don't believe in sororities. ...U...the Woman of the Year thing--the Alpha Kappa Alphas, whom I turned ^{up} my nose at, and joined the Deltas,--and I'll be damned if I'd have joined ...?... But your

hindsight is always better than your foresight. ...My sister didn't join...U.... I did influence her, but I didn't say, "don't, don't, don't!" [She made up her own mind?] ...U...U...I think the idea of going to college, particularly Black--"Negro" girls--was so far out, nobody even thought I meant it when I said I was going to Berkeley. I didn't know where Berkeley was. My father took me. And I still remember: they had the old boat in those days, ferry boats with automobiles on them, because see, the bridges were being built...?... I can remember him taking me--he was so devoted; he took time off from his **work** and took me over in the car, and we drove on the automobile boat. And it was kind of a picnic day. Just he and I and my sister went. My mother didn't go. I think she had to go to church or club meeting or something,--Missionary Society, that was her big club. And so that was the first I ever Berkeley. And found out that there was an admissions fee. Nobody ever had told me. It was a state university so I knew ...?...free. But it wasn't. Of course, it was nothing like it is now! Wow! It takes a small fortune to go to college these days. I can't believe the tuition is what it is at USF. Of course, USF, it's a private school. But...?...I'm just persecuting myself...U...\$1900 a year! [Jules?:] "Don't you worry. It's worth it." And I said, "I'm glad you think so." Wow!

JW: In what other ways...?...difficult...U...?

JC: Well, I was unprepared. I hadn't taken any sciences since (?) biology. And since I was going to get into...?...arts, I had about sixteen units of college science to take. And for somebody who's not scientifically oriented, and who avoids,--I never have had physics or chemistry in my life--and to avoid them I had to take all these other esoteric things, which, in the long run, I should have. But nobody advised me. I didn't know. And there wasn't

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anyone in San Francisco who had been to college, except the Davidsons, and they...U.... Although I did...Tallulah (sp?) Davidson, the youngest...?...of this fabulous family that nobody knows too much about. I asked Belinda Davidson, who later became Belinda Mabson, I asked her if she would tell me something...?... She said, "Oh child, it's so long since I went, I've forgotten all about it." And that was the extent that she helped. They were in the Catholic church. So they...U...U...I think they go;...I don't remember. But I know that they were one of the founding groups for St. Benedict the Moor Church, which is the Black Catholic church of San Francisco, the only one. And up to the day of their deaths, they were loyal and active. They both died rather suddenly. They were old enough, but they died suddenly. The brother, their only brother, Dr. Stewart (sp?) Davidson, the first Black doctor in San Francisco, died in Laguna Honda Home. He just died, roughly two years ago. Because Audley used to go there to see him.

JW: ...U...U...

JC: Oh, well, academically, I told you, I loved it. I had a beautiful time there. But socially I didn't count, because of all the rich Jews. And when they had their parties, ...U.... And my friends, that were contemporaneous, were still in grammar school. So we had these...?...parties, you know, where you put yourself in front of the plates. That's about...U.... And then the weenie roasts and skating parties. And we belonged to June Annie's (sp??) ...I wasn't unhappy. I was just very restricted. I kept feeling there was more to life, but I didn't know quite what it was. But we drowned ourselves in books. We loved the library. And I had a friend, Fran (?) Kaplan, and then Michi, of course. Michi's very bright. But Michi was older. She always gave a blessing to the group in that my mother trusted her. So we could go practically

anywhere Michi wanted to go. And Michi, fortunately, was very ...
 ?...And even in those days, they did have, I guess they called it
 "encouragement" (that's what they used to call it) "encouragement
 groups." And they had us read books. And if you read ...?...
 library, then you got invited to the Story Hour. ...U...did have
 somebody who told stories well, or a clown from the circus, or
 something like that. Or they had Punch and Judy shows. I loved
 marionettes. In fact I ~~used~~ to perform in the Marionette Theater
 years ago at the (?) Street Theater. ...U...Saturday
 matinees. I had my own marionette stage, which I donated to the
 ...?... So I had a happy time, but it was a very simple time, you
 know. Of course, I'm looking backwards now from the viewpoint of an
 adult, a mature adult. Now, looking back, it seems extremely
 simple. Then, it seemed the way life was. I adored books, good
 books. I didn't know any bad books. I adored good books. Never
 read any trash. I adored the Kenilworth, the Waverly novels. And
 I would read something like Ivanhoe. I was really back in that
 century. I enjoyed so much the writings of George Eliot, which
 isn't exactly "popular" today. But Adam Bede, and I...?...Silas
Marner. And I enjoyed The Mill on the Floss, and The Ring. I
 enjoyed that. Later in life, I enjoyed Lord...??...'s books very
 much. I've enjoyed books that are beautiful in concept, and
 extremely good in language. I enjoy reading Shakespeare, as is
 obvious. Senator Hayakawa gave me this [volume on the table].
 I don't know. I guess it's a way of avoiding things. I don't
 care much for writers like James Baldwin,...even Native Son was a
 trip (?) for me. I know those things exist. But they make me very
 unhappy and frustrated because I can't do much about them. If it's
 something like "A Raisin in the Sun" or "Nothing But A Man" or
 "Sounder"...those ...U... . The sordid, no matter how gorgeously

they're written, just leave me so dissipated that I get indigestion. "Cause Audley says, "Oh-oh. What you been reading?" Not "what have you been eating?": "What have you been reading?" And I refuse to look at these Black comedies on TV.. Because they always show the mother as about 200 pounds overweight. And the kids using all this bad language, and ...U...U... Well, never mind. You didn't ask me that.

JW: We'll come to that some other time.

JC: O.K..

JW: How did you happen to major in economics?

JC: Well, I like economics. And I got top grades in every economics course I took. ...?...so I decided that that would be a good companion major--I really majored in English. ...?...made a good companion major, for teaching perhaps. ...?...worked out fairly well.

JW: Do you remember any outstanding teachers at Berkeley?

JC: Yes. I remember...U...U...outstanding...Ira...Economics.

JW: Any others(?)?

JC: Yes. Samuel...?...Holmes, Professor of Biology. Eight o'clock I had to be there, from San Francisco. And that old guy, who was very, very good in ...?... , said that the Whites were the superior race. Because that sort of...U.... He taught Zoology II, "Zoo 2" we used to call it, which was for people who weren't very scientifically inclined. And also--I think he's dead too--Lowenberg, Professor Lowenberg, who was Philosophy. That was my introduction to philosophy. And as a very young person, I was just...?...by this man. He was a popular lecturer. He would fill Wheeler Hall, and people would come to hear him who really weren't in the course. So they began locking doors, because the people in the course couldn't get seats. Lowenberg was the first one who stood up at the podium

and said, "This podium seems to be standing still, but it's filled with incessant, feverish activity." And this seemed such a contradiction to me! How could this be? And, of course, he was leading into Lucretius (?) and De Rerum Naturum (On the Nature of the Atom). And the incessant revolution of the neutron, and so forth and so on. Now this was pretty scientific. But I liked it. And I've always loved philosophy. So I took a minor (?) in Philosophy.

JW: Were professors "open" to students, other than in their official capacities?

JC: No. No. They were there on a remote pinnacle. Because there were just five or six hundred people on the ...U...U....What with my stupid (?) development, and my chronological misfit, I should have gone...?.... But I could have gone to a smaller school, and then transferred later. Because I was really scared half the time. I didn't know the ropes. When I did begin, to catch on, I was graduating. But, no, they weren't accessible. They kept hours. But when you went into their office hours, you had a meeting there or "section" meeting. You never saw the professor. He was aloof and mystic, away somewhere. In graduate school, they were much more approachable.

JW: They were or were not?

JC: Oh, they were. They were. Because they had to advise you on your thesis, and they also--even if they weren't on your Committee, they were part of the crew that was responsible. And the University takes a very dim view of people failing in graduate school. In fact, if you don't maintain a certain average, you have to leave anyway.

JW: What kind of--were you involved in any extracurricular activities, other than...?

JC: Yes. ...U...and so I was on the International Women's Committee of the "Y," the U C "Y." And then I ...?...International House. I was on the Reception Committee of that, although I didn't live there, of course. So I've always been kind of interested in international affairs,--people whose...?...came from the Orient and from...?... I didn't like the Africans much, because they were so darn "superior." ...U...came the South American countries, Central American countries. I used to have a boyfriend from Costa Rica. And I like him very much. So that gave me an insight into some of the customs of the world(?).

JW: Is that how you developed an interest in international...?...from people? or from your father's interest in the National Geographic, or...?

JC: My grandfather's original interest, I guess, spurred me. He was, as I told you,...?...with every port in the world, in his long career on boats. And I think he implanted this interest in me. And then I ultimately became fascinated with the whole idea that (?) there might be some other people who were superior who weren't white. Although every once in a while I'd think, "Hmmm. What a dirty trick you played on me, Lord: out of every ten people, only one is black, and I had to be it (?). Why? Why do I have doors closed? Why do I have this...U...U...?" But I got out of that. And it wasn't so much bitter as just "gosh, why me???"

JW: What did you write your thesis on? Do you remember?

JC: Oh, sure. I've written two. One was "Innovative Techniques in the Teaching of English"...U. And the other one was "Implementing Experimental Programs in the San Francisco Unified School District." But that was rewritten and published in their curriculum bulletin. They still use some of it, incidentally. And they've made several tapes from that. Because the models we used for innovation eventually

got me to being the demonstration teacher for the District. And I was supposed to have two semesters, and I've got fifteen in, of demonstrating English, before I went into Administration.

JW: "Demonstrating" means exactly what?

JC: Well, innovative techniques of teaching English. And then having a demonstration group and going all over the schools with your class or in TV. I've been on TV a lot with a class. Or before teachers' training sessions. Showing how it's done. And book companies love it, especially if you're using their book. They're always sending,-- that's how I got this 2000-volume library, with books sent to me I never would use. And I was honest; but they wanted me to have the books. I was on the curriculum committee too. That helped. Yes, that's demonstration teaching. And it was very nice, because I had a restricted program. I didn't have to do a lot of the book work teachers usually do. And then it's pretty nice, to go from not being wanted in the [school] system to be^{ing} the demonstration teacher in English. It's pretty nice.

JW: How...Did your sister's experience at Berkeley differ from yours?

JC: Yes. My sister's a better [scholar]...

END TAPE

February 14, 1978

Selected Items from the Résumé of Professional and Community Experiences

JOSEPHINE E. COLE
1598 - 36th Avenue
San Francisco, California (94122)
681 - 9939

Education

Girls High School, San Francisco
University of California (Berkeley)
A.B. Degree ---Economics, English
M.A. Degree ---Educational Psychology
Administrative Credential, Secondary and junior college)
San Francisco State University

Professional Highlights

- * First Black to become a school teacher in San Francisco. Appointed to first grade at Raphael Weill School, 1501 O'Farrell Street, in 1944
- * First Black to become a secondary school teacher in San Francisco. Appointed to Balboa High School, 1000 Cayuga Avenue, in 1948. Subject: English and, subsequently, French classes in addition to English. Length of term at Balboa--1948 to 1963.
- * Educational Counselor, representing San Francisco Unified Schools, in the eight youth-serving agencies project known at the Bayview-Hunters Point Youth Opportunities Project. It subsequently became the model for the Human Resources program of Youth Opportunity Centers, established throughout the so-called poverty districts of San Francisco. Term of service: 1964-1967
- * Appointed Director of Guidance Service Centers for the Special Education Division of the San Francisco Unified Schools. Responsibility for implementation of the new centers as well as their administration. Staff of 27 teachers and specialists
Term of service 1967-1968.
- * Promoted from the Guidance Service Centers to Supervisor of all junior and senior high school relations. Supervisor of Student Relations and Community Committees from 1968 to 1974.
- * Retired from school system and made Education Officer, U.S. Department of State
50 U.N. Plaza (formerly 50 Fulton Street)
U.S. Department of State Reception Center-- Room 112
September, 1975 to December, 1976 (Change of administrat
- * Sponsor of Basic Law Workshops for the San Francisco Public Schools--1973 to the present
(Judges Joseph Kennedy, Harry Low, Agnes O'Brien Smith, advisers)
Area Coordinator for Law in a Free Society-(Civic education program of the
San Francisco Area 1977 - California State Bar)
- * Appointed part-time faculty member, lecturer in Urban Problems
University of San Francisco 1970 to 1972
- * Elected to international honor society for education, Delta Kappa Gamma
1970

Community Affairs Participation

- 1- Member of Mayor's Criminal Justice Council Education Committee 1974-1976
William Mallen, Director Joseph Botka, Chairman of Committee
- 2- Director of Summer Sansei Teacher Aides Program June to August, 1968
Japanese community supplied the funds. I coordinated the training and placement of the college age Sansei aides, seven in number, who assisted as paraprofessionals to seven selected summer elementary schools. High praise and documented commendation on file. Model studied by various individuals for responsibilities in para-professional programs later developed in the E.S.E.A. projects in the San Francisco schools.
- 3- Community Activities Consultant for the International Teachers Exchange Program at San Francisco State University. Dr. Hugh Baker and Mrs. Barbara Mee, of the State faculty, administrators. 1960, through 1964
- 4- People -to-People Award 1962
Josephine Cole's English Laboratory at BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL selected by committee and awarded honor by the late Robert F. Kennedy, then Attorney-General of the United States, in Kansas City, Missouri. Community activities of the combined high school and college groups in international activities, judged unique and excellent. Documentation; Special article, Balboa High School Yearbook--1962
- 5- Member, Japanese American Education Committee, 1976 to the present
Secretary, Mrs. Katherine Reyes, Asian Specialist, 135 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco 94102
- 6- Elected Woman of the Year... 1957
by
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- 7- Official Chaperone, San Francisco-Osaka Town Affiliation Committee Student Tour to Osaka, Japan June, 1971
Mayor Joseph Alioto Charles Von Loewenfeldt, President

Note: Many experiences have been omitted for the sake of brevity. Validation of the above statements exists in official files at the Board of Education's administrative offices, 135 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California. 94102 Also, newspaper clippings, pictures and accounts in schools' journals, letters of commendation, etc. are available on request.

A facsimile of the writer's term of office record with the U.S. Department of State can also be produced on request.

Signed, *Josephine E. Cole*

(Mrs.) Josephine Cole
1598-36th Avenue
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94102

